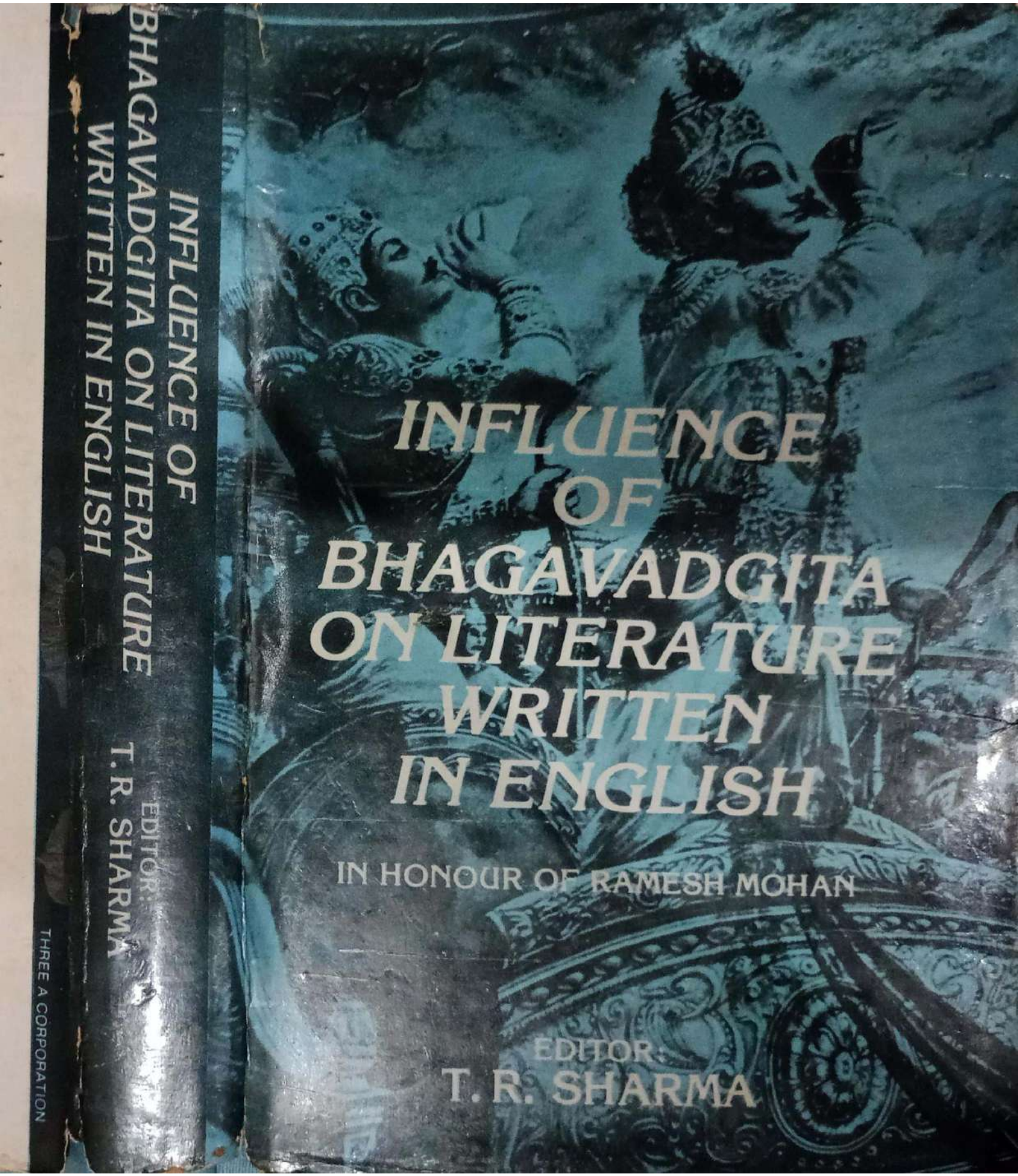
INFLUENCE OF BHAGAVADGITA ON LITERATURE WRITTEN IN ENGLISH
EDITOR: T. R. SHARMA
THREE A CORPORATION
INFLUENCE OF BHAGAVADGITA ON LITERATURE WRITTEN IN ENGLISH
IN HONOUR OF RAMESH MOHAN
EDITOR: T. R. SHARMA

INFLUENCE OF BHAGAVADGITA ON LITERATURE WRITTEN IN ENGLISH

In Honour of Ramesh Mohan

Editor : T. R. SHARMA

Although ancient Indian works, such as the Vedas, the Upanishads, etc., exercised an irresistible fascination on the imagination of the Western world from times immemorial, the Bhagavad-gita perhaps disseminated the Indian philosophical ideas more effectively and extensively than any other book from the East. First translated into English in 1785 by Sir Charles Wilkins under the patronage of Sir Warren Hastings, the then Governor General of India, the teachings of the Bhagavad-gita sank deep into the Western psyche. Throughout the nine-teenth century there has been a spate of translations of the Gita into almost all the languages of the Western world. Hardly had there been a writer of eminence in English language in Europe and America who failed to imbibe the main teachings of the Gita. Parti-cularly, the theory of Duty (Karma) as propounded by Lord Krishna percolated through the Western world. Men of letters like Southey, Coleridge, Emerson, Thoreau, Carlyle, Matthew Arnold, Edwin Arnold, Whitman, in the nineteenth century and W.B. Yeats, T.S. Eliot, Aldous Huxley, Isherwood and many others in the twen-tieth century assimilated the ideas of the Gita so inten-sely that they have given expre-ssion to them in their works.

In this *festschrift* volume in hon-our of Professor Ramesh Mohan, the influence of the Bhagavadgita has been traced on all those writers who acknowledged having read it and followed its teach-ings.

For Rai Sahib Kumar Sharma
with love
Lakshman

Meerut.
4-3-89.

INFLUENCE OF BHAGAVADGITA ON LITERATURE WRITTEN IN ENGLISH

In Honour of Ramesh Mohan

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TO

SIR CHARLES WILKINS

(1750–1833)

WHO FIRST INTRODUCED

BHAGAVADGITA

TO THE

ENGLISH KNOWING WORLD

IN 1785

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The editor is indebted to all those who have directly and indirectly helped in and associated themselves with bringing out this volume. Some papers sent for publication could not be included due to paucity of space. I owe an apology for this. I am also beholden to Professor T. N. Singh, Retired Professor and Head, Department of English, B. H. U., Varanasi for his enlightening suggestions. My colleagues Dr. Manorma Trikha, Dr. S. K. Vohra and Dr. Pratibha Tyagi in the department extended all co-operation in arranging and printing of the articles. Dr. Arun Kumar of the department deserves a special mention for spending many a day and night in going through the texts and proofs of the articles.

—Editor

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Professor Ramesh Mohan
1988

PREFACE

The department of English, Meerut University, Meerut feels honoured in bringing out the *Festschrift* for Professor Ramesh Mohan. Born on March 20, 1920 at Meerut, Professor Mohan began his teaching career in his *alma-mater*—Lucknow University—in 1942. He obtained his degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English from Leeds University under the supervision of the distinguished scholar, Professor Bonamy Dobree on *The English Political Novel in England in the 19th Century*. He became Professor and Head of English Department of Lucknow University in 1961. On the departure of Professor V. K. Gokak from Central Institute of English, Hyderabad, Professor Mohan was persuaded in 1967 to accept the directorship of the Institute. The Central Institute of English at Hyderabad then had only two limited goals to perform—first, to give proficiency in English language teaching to selected teachers from schools, colleges and Universities and secondly to give publicity to the importance of English language. Professor Mohan, with his untiring efforts and clear vision, saw to it that C. I. E. became C. I. E. F. L. (Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages) and a prestigious seat of learning, training and research with an international repute. Under his stewardship the Institute acquired the status of a 'deemed University' and is now a Mecca for any teacher of English in the country, irrespective of his place and position. It was during his tenure of almost two decades as Director that the Institute could attract such literary luminaries as Shri Raja Rao, Mulk Raj Anand, Professor K. R. Srinivas Iyenger, Professor Y. V. Kantak

and such distinguished linguists as Gimson, Halliday and Sinclair. At the Institute he successfully tried to remove the dichotomy of teaching language and literature. Apart from academic growth, physically the Institute owes almost all its important buildings to Professor Ramesh Mohan. As an expression of gratitude, the newly built library in the Institute is named after him.

Professor Mohan expanded the academic frontiers of C. I. E. F. L., Hyderabad by opening regional centres at far-flung places such as Shillong in Assam and Lucknow in U. P. Is it not a matter of pride for Indians that the Governments of Singapore, Vietnam and Afghanistan not only consulted Professor Mohan but also sought his active help for improving the standards of English teaching in their countries ? Professor Mohan visited these countries, advised them and sent teachers from Indian to help them. On his retirement from the C. I. E. F. L. Hyderabad, the Board of the Institute passed the following resolution placing on record its appreciation of the services rendered by him as the Director :

> This meeting of the Board of Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, Hyderabad places on record its profound appreciation of the splendid services rendered by Professor Ramesh Mohan as the Director of the Institute for nearly 18 years. During his distinguished tenure as its Director, Professor Ramesh Mohan developed the C. I. E. F. L. into a prestigious national centre for specialised training and research in English and foreign languages with the status of a deemed University and acquired for it international reputation and recognition. Professor Ramesh Mohan's identification with the institution was total and his involvement in the process of its development and growth was complete. As the Director of the Institute, he served it with deep commitment and great dynamism. As the team leader of a rarely high calibre, Professor Ramesh Mohan maintained exemplary qualities of human relationship and endeared himself to everyone who came into contact with him.

After his retirement from the C. I. E. F. L. in 1985 he was persuaded to take over as Vice-Chancellor of Meerut University.

Meerut is his home town where he was born and had his education upto graduation. As such, Professor Mohan could not turn down the offer of Vice-Chancellorship at Meerut. Here he took steps to improve the academic atmosphere of the campus by prescribing minimum qualifications for admission and strictly restricting admission of only 15 students to each class. His integrity is unimpeachable, impartiality unquestionable and commitment to quality uncompromising. In matters of appointment too, he cared exclusively for merit. Professor G. C. Banerjee, former Professor and Head, Department of English, University of Bombay, once wrote :

> Nevertheless, while encouraging growth, Dr. Mohan has never compromised on quality. He nas never made an appointment except where the candidate not only fulfilled the requirements laid down, but was well above the average, if not outstanding. He would keep a post vacant than fill it with a mediocrity.

In recognition of his services to the academic world the Government of G. D. R. awarded him the prestigions 'Jacob Wilhelm Grimm Prize' in November 1986. A scholar and administrator *par excellence*, Professor Ramesh Mohan is an island of decency and grace. Singularly free from rampant weaknesses of nepotism, casteism and regionalism, Professor Mohan is exclusively devoted to academic cause. A few achievements of Professor Mohan are given below.

Bio-data

1.	DATE AND PLACE OF BIRTH	20 March, 1920—Meerut, India.
2.	ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS	M. A. (Lucknow), 1940. Certificate of Proficiency in French (Lucknow), 1940. Ph. D. (Leeds), 1945 (Ph. D. thesis on **The English Political Novel in the 19th Century).**

3. TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE

Lecturer in English, Lucknow University—1942-1955.

Reader in English, Lucknow University—1955-1961.

Professor & Head of the Department of English & Modern European Languages, Lucknow University—1961-1967.

Visiting Professor of English and Linguistics, University of Illinois, U. S. A.—Feb. to May 1971
Aug. to Dec. 1975

Director, Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages, Hyderabad—1967-1985.

Vice-Chancellor, Meerut University , since February, 1985.

4. MEMBERSHIP OF ACADEMIC BODIES :

Member, University Grants Commission.

President, Indian Association of English Studies (1975-1980).

Convener, U. G. C. Panel on English & Foreign Languages.

Member, Executive Council, University of Hyderabad (1974-1977).

Member, Executive Council, University of Lucknow (1975-1978).

Member, Planning Board and Academic Courses, North Eastern Hill University (1973-1976).

Member, General Assembly, Indian Council of Cultural Relations.

Member, Advisory Committee, Central Institute of Indian Languages, Mysore (1973-1985).

Member, Board of Directors, American Studies Research Centre, Hyderabad.

Member, Board of Directors, U. S. Educational Foundation in India (1980).

Member, Executive Board, Sahitya Akademi.

Member, Board of Governors, Regional Institute of English, Bangalore (1967-1985).

Member, Mandal, Kendriya Hindi Sansthan, Agra (1967-1985).

Member, Governing Council, Indian Institute of Science, Bangalore (1981).

President, Association of Indian Universities, New Delhi—(1982-83).

5. PUBLICATIONS, PAPERS AND ADDRESSES

"The Political Novels of Anthony Trollope"
(Indian Journal of English Studies, 1961).

"Language, Linguistics and Literature"
(Inaugural address at the Osmania University Euglish Forum, (1967).

"George Meredith and the Political Novel"
(**Golden Jubilee Volume**, Osmania University, 1968).

"Teaching of English at the University Level in India"
(**Education & Society**, 1968).

"English in India"
(Paper presented to the Planning Commission, 1973).

Presidential Address at the Silver Jubilee Session of the All-India English Teachers' Conference held at Patiala, December, 1974.

Address at the National Workshop on **Syllabus Reform in English** at CIEFL, March 1977 (Published by U. G. C.).

"Some Aspects of Style and Language in Indian English Fiction"
(**Indian Writing in English**, Orient Longmans, 1978).

"Iqbal, Man and Poet"
(Key note address at the Iqbal Centenary Celebrations in Hyderabad, 1978).

"Some Thoughts on English by AIR"
(Wissenshaftliche Zeitschrift, Jena, 1979).

"Stylistics and Literary Interpretation"
(**Issues on Stylistics**, Published by C. I. E. F. L., 1980).

"Stylistics and Literary Study"
(Inaugural address at the Osmania University English Forum, 1980).

6. TRAVEL ABROAD

Attended the Commonwealth Universities Congress at Cambridge (U. K.) in 1953.

Visited the United States from Feb. 1957 to July 1957 to Study the working and organisation of General Education in American Universities.

Visited Great Britain from October 1960 to July 1961 for research at the School of Applied Linguistics, Edinburgh.

Attended the Conference on Commonwealth Language and Literature in Brisbane, Australia in August 1968.

Led the Indian delegation to the RELC Seminar on ELT held at Bangkok, 1970.

Made several visits to universities and other educational centres in the U. K. since 1969, on the invitation of the British Council, to discuss collaborative programmes.

Visited universities and educational centres in France in 1975, 1977 and 1979 on the invitation of the French Government, to discuss collaborative programmes.

Visited the Regional English Language Centre at Singapore in 1970, 1975 and 1983.

Visited USA from February to May 1971, and August to December 1975 as Visiting Professor in English and Linguistics at the University of Illinois.

Visited educational centres in Hawaii, Tokyo, Hong Kong and Bangkok in 1975.

Visited Kabul, Afghanistan in 1973 and 1975 on the invitation of Kabul University to assist the University in setting up a department of English.

Visited universities and other educational centres in the G.D.R. in 1972, 1975 and 1977 and 1984 on the invitation of the Ministry of Higher and Technial Education, G.D.R., to discuss collaborative programmes.

Visited educational centres in Aachen, Hedleberg and Munich in West Germany in 1977 on the invitation of the German Academic Exchange.

Visited USSR in 1977 and 1984 to discuss collaborative programmes between CIEFL and Pushkin Institute of Russian Language in Moscow, under the Indo-Soviet Cultural Exchange Programme.

Visited Vietnam in 1981 as a member of a delegation sent by Government of India to discuss the assistance to be provided to Vietnamese teachers fer training in Indian Universities in the field of Engineering, Agriculture and English teaching.

Visited Manila in 1983, to attend a meeting of the group constituted by UNESCO to consider the feasibility of setting up an Association of the Universities of Asia and the Pacific.

Visited Dubrovnik (Yugoslavia) in 1982 to present a paper on "The Basic Goals of University Education in the light of Social Development" at an International Seminar on 'University Today'.

Visited Birmingham (U. K.) in August 1984 to attend a meeting of the Executive Heads of Commonwealth Universities and the Congress of Commonwealth Universities.

Visited Penauq (Malaysia) in August 1986 to attend a meeting of the Executive Heads of the Commonwealth Universities.

Visited Berlin (G. D. R.) in November 1986 to receive the 'Jacob Wilhelm Grimm Prize' of the German Democratic Republic.

University of Meerut
India

—T. R. Sharma

INTRODUCTION

(Global Response to the Bhagavadgita)

T. R. Sharma

Perhaps the first reference to India in a piece of literature, written outside the sub-continent, is in Aeschylus (525-456 B. C.) the great Greek tragedy writer. In his play *Suppliant Women* he writes :

> And tales I know, how Indian women roam
> By camels drawn, each in the tented home.

It is not a flattering reference. Not the philosophical works, but the collections of tales such as the *Jataka*, the *Panchatantra* and the *Hitopadesa* seem to have first attracted the attention of the writers of the West. Tales of Vishnu Sharma's *Panchatantra* mixed up with some tales of the *Hitopadesa* and the *Kathasaritsagar* became popular in the West. We have the following interesting entry in the *Oxford Companion to English Literature* :

> *The Fables of Bidpai or Pilpay or Kailash and Dimmah*, is the title of the Arabic Version of a lost original of 'Panchatantra', a celebrated Sanskrit collection of fables, the source of much European folklore. 'Bidpai' is a corruption of 'bidbah', the appelation of the chief scholar at the court of an Indian prince.[1]

It is believed that Chaucer (1340-1400 ?) based his *Pardoner's Tale* on one of the *Jataka* stories. But the earliest reference in

English to these tales is found in Sir Thomas North's (1535-1601) *The Moral Philosophie of Doni*. When in the age of Renaissance intellectual horizons had unprecedented expansion, attempts were made not only to revive the Greek learning and philosophy but also to know the unknown lands. The result was that the realistic account of India began to emerge in the West. Travellers and missionaries such as the Dutch missonary Abraham Roger, Edward Terry, Thomas Coryate, John Ogilby, Richard Elien, Richard Willes and Sir Thomas Herbert either translated some of the important literary works of India or gave datailed descriptions about the social and cultural condition of this country. Out of them Abraham Roger has the credit of being the first to translate a book of India into a European language. He was a Dutch Calvinist missionary who came to Coromandel coast and Batavia (now Jakarta) in 1630 and stayed upto 1647. He died in 1649. He translated the *Vairagya and Niti-Satakas* of Bhartrahari into Dutch language. It was first published in Leyden in 1651. From Dutch it was translated into German and published in 1633 in Nuernberg. In 1670 Thomas la Grue translated Roger's work into French and published it in Amsterdem. Thomas Coryate (1577 ?-1617) came to India in 1616 and reached Agra which was then the capital of the Mughals. He died at Surat. His letter, written from the court of the Moghul Emperor, was published by Purchas. His descriptions about India acquainted the West with the realistic conditions of this country. But there are scholars who believe that the Upanishadic philosophy attracted the Greeks thousand years ago and that Pythagorus, Anaxarches, Pyrrho, and other Greek philosophers visited India.[2] There is no denying the fact that there are echoes of Indian thought in Pythagorus (6th century B. C.) and Plato (427-348 B. C.) which cannot be described merely accidental. It is also stated by several historians that Plotinus (*c.* A. D. 203-62), the exponent of Neo-platonic philosophy evinced keen response to the Indian philosophical ideas.

However, the one book that carried the spiritual message of India to the remotest corners of the world is Bhagavadgita. Translated into approximately seventy five world languages, the Gita is second only to the Bible in its popularity. As the historical records set forth, the first translation of the Gita into a foreign language is in old Javanese, once the language of Java. India and Java were once politically one and in the reign of Sri Vijaya

(7th to 12th cen. A. D.) the translations of the *Ramayana* and *Mahabharata* were done into old Javanese. Shri D. P. Singhal, in his book *India and the World Civilization*, writes :

> Some Sanskrit inscriptions suggest that Indian philosophical and literary texts were carried to Java from very early times, although there is no record of it....Later, under the patronage of the great empires...Indian epics, such as the *Mahabharata* and the *Ramayana* were translated and adapted in the Javanese language. Several recensions of the *Ramayana* exist in both verse and prose in Indonesia. ..The *Mahabharata* is even more popular. First translated into Old Javanese in the 10th or 11th century, it has been repeatedly translated and adapted.... It appears to have captured the imagination of the Indonesian peoples, who consider themselves to be the descendants of the heroes of the *Mahabharata*, and believe that all the drama took place on their soil.[3]

However, the first full-length translation of the *Mahabharata* into a foreign language is in Persian done in India at the behest of Akbar, the Mughul ruler. The translation of the Gita appears as a part of the Persian rendering of the *Mahabharata*, entitled *Razm Nameh*. It is reported that Akbar annexed the services of Najib Khan, Badaoni, Sultan Thanisari, Mulla Sheri, Faizi and some Brahmin pundits for this book. The work was started on January 26, 1582. The Moghul emperor spent a huge amount on the translation and the illustration of the manuscripts. The introduction to this was written by Abul Fazl. Some scholars think that the entire translation was done by Abul Fazl, although there is no mention of this in the *Ain-i-Akbari*. M. Q. Khan, in one of his articles, writes :

> In the translation is lacking the regular division into separate chapters....Some of the terms have been rendered into Persian aptly and in a beautiful manner.... Equivalents for some of the words used in the text are mentioned either in between the lines under the relevant words or in the margin....Incidentally, the translator has indulged in amplification and has added explanations to the original contents. At places the translator fails to

> establish the relationship and the correspondence of the sense in the original text....The ornate and the inflated prose manifested in this work reminds us of the characteristic style generally adopted by Abul Fazl.[4]

But the translation that introduced the Bhagavadgita to the Western world with a bang was done by Charles Wilkins (1750-1833) in English. It was published in 1785. Charles Wilkins was a competent scholar of Persian, Bengali and Sanskrit. He learnt Sanskrit, at the instance of Warren Hastings (1732-1818), the first Governor-general of India. Wilkins, alongwith Jones was the founding member of the Asiatic Society of Bengal. He also became the first librarian of the East India Company Library (later India Office Library), London. Charles Wilkins also translated *Hitopadesa* (1787), Sakuntala episode (1794-95) and printed a *Sanskrit Grammar* (1808). Warren Hastings wrote the Introduction and recommended to the Chairman of Directors, East India Company that Wilkins' translation of the Gita be published. On its publication, the translation electified the imagination of the English knowing people. However, a few tried to find fault with the translation. The following rejoinder of the editor sets out the contribution made by Wilkins' translation :

> Adelung states that the missionary John, in a letter to Rudiger, writes that Wilkins, in this version, has introduced many European notions not in the original, and entirely opposed to the Hindoo life and genius. Though I have found no other authority for this opinion, its correctness seems probable, if we consider how little then was known of the people, of their institutions and their literature. That free intercourse which has had a gradual growth between the learned caste of Europe, was then in its infancy. The priests guarded their sacred books with jealous care from strangers. The translator had to contend with the obscurities of a language, confessedly one of the most difficult to Europeans, and which the Brahmans spend their lives in studying. These circumstances and many others which might be enumerated, rendered the task of this venerable Sanskrit scholar tenfold more difficult than it would now be; and will lead us rather to

> wonder at his eminent success in the Herculean labour he undertook, than to carp at its slight blemishes.[5]

After Wilkins' Gita there was a series of translations of this book into various European languages. However, the history of the Gita translation has a surprise for those who know the ancient Indo-China cultural ties. It is astonishing that China remained lukewarm to the appeal of the Gita and we do not have any translation in Chinese before 1979. Perhaps one reason was the early conversion of China to Buddhism. Buddhism, as we know, is not responsive to such Hindu scriptures as the Gita. Fahien, who came to India in 399 A. D. and left for China in 414 A. D., and Hsuan-Chuang who lived in India from 629 to 645 A. D. were Buddhist scholars. Naturally, they were not at all intersted in Hindu scriptures. It is, therefore, natural that among the 1,467 Indian works translated into Chinese, the Bhagavadgita does not figure. Shri D. P. Singhal gives the following explanation for the absence of the translation of the Gita in Chinese :

> Sanskrit and Pali are completely different from Chinese in form and style. Sanskrit has a highly elaborate grammatical system, whilst Chinese has no systematized grammar. Sanskrit is highly inflected, alphabetic and polysyllabic, whilst Chinese is uninflected, ideographic and mainly monosyllabic. And whilst Indian literature is reflective, imaginative and discursive, Chinese literature is terse, concrete, and practical.[6]

But these arguments do not sound plausible. Chi-fa-Hu of the White Horse Monastery at Loyang knew thirty-six languages and translated 211 Sanskrit works into Chinese before his death in 317 A. D. I think the main reason for the absence of the Gita in Chinese was Buddhism. The same is true of Ceylon and Burma.

Africa also does not have any indigenous translation of the Gita. The reason is its having no cultural interaction with the rest of the world for centuries.

Below is given the list of important translations of the Bhagavadgita in different foreign languages of the world. It is not

complete and the editor owes an apology for any important omission. It does not include translations done by Indians in India. An exception is in the case of the Arabic translation. No originality is claimed in preparing this list. The list in every language is in chronological order.

TRANSLATIONS OF THE BHAGAVADGITA INTO FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Wilkins, Charles : The first book directly translated from Sanskrit into English is the Bhagavadgita by Sir Charles Wilkins entitled *The Bhagavadgita* or "Dialogues of Kreeshna and Arjoon, in eighteen lectures, with notes, translated from the original in the Sanskrit, or ancient language of the Brahmans, London, 1785." A new and improved edition was brought out as "*Bhagavadgita* or Dialogues between Krishna and Arjuna, extracted from the Mahabarut, printed at Khizrpoor [near Calcutta], 1809.

Thomson, J. Cockburn : The second translation in English appeared seventy years after the first. Its title was *The Bhagavadgita* or *A Discourse between Krishna and Arjuna on divine matters*. The translation was done by J. Cockburn Thomson who was the disciple of H. H. Wilson. This translation had copious notes, an introduction on Sanskrit philosophy and other matter and was published by Stephen Austin, Hertford in 1855. Alongwith also appeared Thomson's *Bhagvad-Geeta* or *The Sacred Song*.

Oxley, William : *The Philosophy of Spirit, Illustrated by a New Version of the Bhagavadgita* (translation of the Bhagavadgita as an esoteric text), E. Allen, London, 1881.

Davies, John : *The Bhagavad-Geeta or The Sacred Song* (Trubner's Oriental Sev., London, 1882, 1889,1893).

Aronold, Edwin Sir : *The Song Celestial* or *Bhagavad-Geeta* (Trubner & Co., London, 1885).

Bower, H., Rev. : *Bhagavadgita* (Parallel translation into English and Tamil, based on Thomson's, Higginbothan, Madras, 1885).

Judge, William Quan : *Bhagavadgita* : *The Book of Devotion* (Aryan Theosophical Society, Pointlomac, 1890-91).

Besant, Annie : *The Bhagavadgita* or *Lord's Song* (Theosophical Publication Society, London, 1895).

Barnett, Lionel D. : *The Bhagavadgita or the Lord's Song* (Dent, London, 1905).

Johnson, Charles : *The Bhagavadgita : The Songs of the Master* (Theosophical Society, New York, 1908).

Wahab, Henrie : *Gitamritambodhi* (a translation of all the verses of Bhagavadgita, according to A. Besant's Version, 1908).

Brooks, F. T. : *The Bhagavadgita : The Chant of the Blessed One* (Sri Vani Vilas Press, Srirangam, 1909). Also *Bhagavadgita : A Complete Handbook* (Avyayayogo Series, 1911).

Caleb, Clement Cornelius : *The Song Divine or the Bhagavadgita* (Luzac & Co., London, 1911).

Crane, Arthur and Crane, Frank : *The Bhagavadgita or the Battle of Life* (Chicago, 1918).

Edgerton, Franklin : *The Bhagavadgita* or Song *of the Blessed One, India's Favourite Bible*, (Chicagu, 1952).

Hill, W. Douglas P. : *The Bhagavadgita* (Oxford University Press, London, 1928).

Thomas, Edward J. : *The Song of the Lord, Bhagavadgita* (Wisdom of the East Series, John Murray, London, 1931).

Carlyle, Richard : *The Psalms of Krishna* (The Phoenix Press, Los Angeles, California, 1933).

Turner, J. E. : *The Original Gita : The Song of the Supreme Exalted One* (translated from R. Otto's German translation), G. Allen & Unwion, London, 1939.

Lingen, J. R. K., De : *Concordance in the Bhagavadgita* (with annotated translation in Supplement, Edinburgh, 1948.

Wood, Ernest : *The Bhagavadgita Explained* (New Century Foundation Press), Los Angeles, 1954.

Mascaro, Juan : *The Bhagavadgita* (Penguin Classics, C. Nicholls, Great Britain, 1962).

Zaehner, R. C. : *Bhagavadgita in Hindu Scripture, Selected Translations* (Everyman's Library; Dent, London, 1966, pp. 247-325).

Deutsch, Elliot : *The Bhagavadgita* (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, New York, 1968).

Bahm, Archie J. : *The Bhagavadgita or the Wisdom of Krishna* (Somaiya Publication, Anand Press, Bombay, 1970).

Stanford, Ann : *The Bhagavadgita : A New Verse Translation* (Herder and Herder, New York, 1970).

Herman, A. L. : *The Bhagavadgita* (C. Thomas Publications, Illinois, 1973).

Parrinder, Edward Geoffrey : *The Bhagavadgita* (Sheldon Press, London, 1974).

Nicholas, Antonio : 'The Bhagavadgita : The Song of Embodied Vision' in his *Avatara : The Humanization of Philosophy through the Bhagavadgita* (Institute of Advanced Studies of World Religions, Nicolas Hays Ltd., New York, 1976).

Davis, Roy E. : *The Bhagavadgita, God's Revealing World* (Lakemont, 1978).

Latin

Frank. Olhmar : 'Bhagavadgita loca Selecta cum Version' (1820-21).

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Japanese

Takakush, J. : *in Indo-Koseika* (Tokyo, 1921).

Tsuji, N. : *Bhagavadgita* (Tokyo, 1950).

Hattori, M. : *in Indo-shu*, Vol. IV (Tokyo, 1959).

Uno, A. : *in Baramonkyotan* (Tokyo, 1969).

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The first reference to the Gita in Arabic language was made by Al-Biruni in his book *Description of India* (Tarika-al-Hind) in 1030. Al-Biruni translated a few pages of the Gita. About Al-Biruni's translation of the Gita, Jefferey writes :

> "...we cannot always be sure that the recension of a Sanskrit work which we now use in printed texts, e.g. the text of the Gita, is the same recension which was available to him in his day. Secondly, we are never sure how much the text of Al-Biruni's work has suffered in the process of translation." ('Al-Biruni's contribution to Comparative Religion' in *Al-Biruni Commemoration Volume*, Iran Society, Calcutta, 1951, pp. 125-60).

Another translation of the Gita in Arabic language is available in the translation of *Mahabharat* done by W.F. Boustany, published in 1960.

Hebrew (Israel)

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Qalo, Shalmoh : *Bhagavadgita, Shir ha-elohim,* Japho, 1976.

Persian

In Persian the first translation of the *Bhagavadgita* was done in 1582.

Another copy of the translation of the Gita into Persian is available in the collection of the Asiatic Society of Bengal and its title is *Ab-i-Zindagi* or *Water of Life*. This translation was published by Amarnath Madan (Delhi, 1928) under the title *Raz-i-Maghfirat*, and the authorship is attributed to Faizi. However, in the catalogue of the India Office Library there is a mention that the real translator of this text was Dara Shikoh, the elder brother of Aurangzeb. It is believed that when Dara was ruling Benaras, he translated the *Bhagavadgita* in 1656. Then there are many more references to the MSS of the translations of the *Bhagavadgita* and the *Mahabharat* into Persian. Translations of the *Bhagavadgita* into Persian by Abdal-Rahman Chisti entitled *Mirat al-haqaiq* (ca. 1955), Munshi Narain Daspuri's *Gulistan-i-jannat*, (Lahore, 1868), Bakshi Dinanath's *Sri Bhagavadgita*, (Jammu, 1922) are also available.

Old Javanese Modern Javanese and Sundanese

Perhaps the earliest reference to and partial translation of the *Bhagavadgita* is available in the old-Javanese which dates back to 1200 A. D. Fifty-six stanzas of the Gita translated into old-Javanese are available in the version of 1000 A. D. The contacts between Java and India are as old as the reign of Sri Vijaya (7th century to 12th century, A. D.). In modern Javenese the following translation of *Bhagavadgita* is available :

Sishowar-Sojo : *Tjatur Yuda* (Ngajogyakarta, 1955).

In Sundanese the references to *Bhagavadgita* figure in the following rendering of the *Mahabharat* :

Sastrahadiprawira, R. M., Satjadibrata, R. &
Salmun, M. A. : *Mahabharat* (Djakarta, 1949).

Salmun, M. A. : *Dewarutji* (Djakarta, 1953).

Bhasa Indonesia (National Language of Indonesia)

Romo : *Bhagavadgita* (Ho Kim Yoe), Semarang, 1957.

Mantra, I. B. : *Bhagavadgita* (Denpasar, Bali, 1967).

Pendit, Njoman S. : *Bhagavadgita* (Djakarta, 1967).

Balinese (Spoken in Bali Island)

In the Bali island attempts have been made to translate the Gita into Balinese. A Balinese summary of the *Bhagavadgita* in Bengali script was displayed at a Gita exhibition in the Kuppusami Research Institute of Madras, 1950.

Malagasy (West Indonesia)

Malagasy is spoken in the West Indonesia. It is also spoken in Madagaskar, an island near east-African coast.

Rakotonirainy, J. : *Bhagavadgita*, Dikany avy amin ny Sanskrit nataon (Tananarive, 1939).

Tai (Tai or Siamese is spoken around Bangok)

Manavidura, Saeng : *Sri Bhagavadgita* (Bangkok, 1972).

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Saleem Ahmed

ISLAM AND THE GITA : A STUDY IN CONTINUITY

तमेव शरणम् गच्छ सर्वभावेन भारत ।
तत्प्रासादात् परां शान्तिम् स्थानम्प्राप्स्यसि शाश्वतम्

Flee unto Him for shelter with all thy being
O Bharat
By His grace shalt thou obtain supreme peace
and eternal abode.

—Lord Krishna

As I understand from the Gita, there is a great deal in common between Islam and the preachings of the Gita which can be summed up as Sanatan Dharma. They seem to be almost identical in more than one respect. The most speaking sort of identity between Islam and the Gita, in may opinion, is this that both of them are known the world over and both of them are not properly understood. While the Gita is generally, rather usually, appreciated as a philosophical poem or treatise, Islam is taken to be the way to Harem or the religion of the cruel sword.

In this paper an attempt has been made to broach the subjects like the meaning of Islam, the Gita, human relationship and relationship between God and man, that is, the *Ekeshwarvada.* Reference has also been made to the sources of man's learning of these relationships, as also his duty and aim in this world. Attempt has also been made to show that the Quran is the last of all the revealed Books of Guidance to mankind and Muhammad, the last of all the prophets and messengers of God.

The purpose of this article is to invite the literati to go into

these books a bit more attentively, for they also treat the themes of human relationships. They may not please individuals. So do many a work of Browning, Carlyle or James Joyce. But their masterpieces are still prescribed for reading and criticism. Let us go into these two books with the characteristic detachment of a genuine critic and examine why they claim to be of higher worth and value. Perhaps, such a study will be conducive to bringing into being a communally harmonised and integrated society of human beings.

God, who has created man with all that he needs for his physical being on this earth, has made suitable arrangement for his moral being, too. Moreover, He has endowed him with some devices of knowing, such as instincts, senses and intellect, by means of which he can explore the physical truths of things. That is to say, he is almost fully equipped for exploiting God's plenty. Here, he needs no regular instructions from his Creator, though the Latter does not withhold His grace from inspiring him at times with unique ideas which result in great discoveries and inventions. However, in the moral and the metaphysical spheres of life, man is not so much self-competent. Here, he does need proper guidance. For he cannot be his own moral guide in this enigmatic world. His native devices of knowledge are as limited in scope as he himself is in this vast phenomenal design. Further, there are facts of life which he does not and cannot understand. He makes frequent attempts at explaining them, but his explanations do not convince even his own mind. His opinions and theories remain incredible to some and unintelligible to many and fall short of forming the basis of unity among mankind. It cannot be denied that he knows the effect of certain things on his physical existence. For instance, he knows it well that poison kills and honey invigorates. But he is unable to understand what effect it will have on his moral conduct or character if he eats or drinks or does a particular thing. Though he may insist on following his own codes of morality, he cannot make others follow them with all sincerity and devotion. Among other things, his intentions are, almost invariably, directed by the *mamka* or Mine which is an essential part of his nature. His desire of living at peace with himself and others is frustrated because he does not know what thought or word or deed of his is right in the true sense of the word. He may know it by way of trial and error. But

this method depends on chance and lingering. This is the "rub" that Arjun faces in the Gita. He does not know the right course of action. It is with utter despondency that he utters:

न चैतद्विद्म: कतरन्नो गरीयो
यद्वा जयेम यदि वा नो जयेयु:
Nor do we know which for us is better
whether we conquer them or they conquer us.[1]

And,

पृच्छामि त्वां धर्मसंमूढ़चेता: यच्छ्रेय: स्यान्निश्चितं
With mind confused as to duty,
I ask thee which may be the better.[2]

The question which now arises is: if man does not know the right course of action in such situations, who is it that can be his true guide ? Can he be rightly guided by any one else than the *Tattvajnani*—he who knows everything ? And who else is a better *Tattvajnani* than the Creator who is *Jnana*[3] and the *Satyam Jnanam Anantam* ?[4] It is He who has created this universe and all its *tattvas* or essences. He knows their native actions and reactions. Man can know them only when this Absolute *Tattvajnani* lets him do. Without His Will and Guidance man will go on groping after truth in this life. It is therefore undeniable that man does need guidance in the moral sphere of his life.

That was probably the reason why God took it upon Himself to reveal the criterion of right and wrong to man, who He loves most and whose good pleases Him. So, He devised a system of life and revealed it to him. This is what we call the Divine Guidance, Will or Message. Its salient features are: belief in the Unity of God, surrender of self to Him and action in obedience to His Supreme Will. Accordingly, man's having full faith in His Word, obeying it body and soul or practising it by combined *Jnana, Bhakti* and *Karma* is called Islam.

The literal meaning of the word Islam in Arabic is surrender, obedience, dutifulness, peace. In its religious connotation, Islam means *sampurna atmasamarpana* or total surrender of self to God; *ananayabhaven agyapalan* or unqualified obedience to His Word, and the establishment of *Shantim* or peace with Him as well as with His creatures. Peace with Him means complete surrender of man's own will to God, the *Sarvalokamaheshwaram*, the *Ekamadvitiyah* source of goodness and beneficence. Peace with

His creatures means doing one's duty to *sarvani bhutani* or all living beings.

Al-Quran, the Arabic infinitive, means to recite, to collect, to compile. It may be noted that words almost equivalent to Al-Quran in this sense have been used as the titles of religious scriptures from ancient times and in different places. For example, the Hebrew word "Magra" which the Jews used for the Torah, meant to read or recite. Similarly, the word "Qiryana" which the Syriac Christians used for naming some chapters of the holy Book also meant to read or recite. Even at present, the Christians in Syria, Iraq and Palestine, among others, use this word. In India, The Sanskrit word "gita" also means chanting or reciting.

The Quran is the title of the last text-Book of Divine Guidance, which was revealed to Muhammad, the Prophet. Its subject matter is Man, whose purpose of life and real position in the universe form its central themes. It aims at revealing the Reality and inviting man to pursue that defined course of life which assures of peace and contentment here and in the Hereafter. Revelation is also made to the effect that Truth is the same as it was imparted to the first man on this earth and thereafter to various prophets and messengers in the world for the good of mankind. Hence, all the theories, which man evolves in contravention to this Truth about God, the universe, himself and his relationships, are erroneous and misleading to ruinous consequences. Broadly speaking, the Quran contains, among other things, the tenets or fundamental articles of faith, ecclesiastical duties, socio-ethical codes of conduct, promises of rewards and warnings, historical evidences to show the miserable end of the transgressors or evil doers, instructions through narratives and sermons, codes of civil and criminal procedures, patterns of secular behaviour, governmental, constitutional and commercial laws, martial regulations and ordinances. The emphasis is, however, laid on preaching them to others civilly and persuasively.

The man to whom this Divine Guidance is revealed is called the prophet or messenger of God. It is his duty to follow this Guidance and teach it to others by word and example.

The Muslim in the Quranic sense of the word is one who practises Islam in letter and spirit. If he does not do it, he is not

a Muslim in spite of the fact that he is born to Muslim parents or family and is called by an Islamic name.

I would also like to note here that it is a sheer mistake, or probably a conscious mistake, to designate Islam as Muhammadanism. Islam is not a new religion. It began with the first man on this earth. Muhammad was the last Messenger and Prophet of God, and not the founder of Islam. Similarly, it is a misnomer to call the Muslims the Muhammadans. The Muslims are not Muhammadans in the sense the followers of Juda are Jews, of Christ the Christians or of the Buddha the Buddhists. As far as I understand it, no prophet or messenger of God can be authentically quoted to have advised his followers to call Islam after his personal name. It is man's own doing—an outcome of sectarian hatred, perhaps.

The Bhagavad Gita is the Book which contains eighteen discourses in seven hundred shlokas delivered by Lord Krishna to Arjun during the battle of Kurukshetra. It forms part of the sixth book of the Indian epic the *Mahabharata,* written by Vyasa Ji, with Arjun as the central figure. The central teaching of the Gita consists in discharging duty without attachment and expectation of reward, with belief in God. Emphasis has been laid on lifting up one's lower self by mental equilibrium and dispassion while experiencing the objects of senses. It also deals with the classification of man and the universe on the basis of three *gunas* or qualities, that is, the *Sattva, Rajas* and *Tamas.* Moral guidelines are given in accordance with the social classification. Its main themes comprise of the *Jnana-yoga, Karma-yoga* and *Bhakti-yoga.* Both the Sankhya and the Vedanta schools of philosophy are brought under focus. However, the latter seems to have received greater emphasis. The Gita is said to be the essence of the Vedas and the Upanishads.

The word *gita* in the Sanskrit language means religious teachings or doctrines declared in metrical form by an inspired sage or holy man, directed by divine influence. The word Bhagavat means being of a virtuous disposition: disposed to virtuous acts: virtuous or righteous. In its Vedic connotation, *Bhagavat* means glorious, illustrious, sacred, revered, divine, holy. It has been frequently used in the Vedic literature as an epithet of a holy personage. It is in this sense that the word *Bhagwan* is still used for a venerated or holy persen.

Thus the compound word *Bhagavat-gita* will denote the religious teachings or doctrines declared in metrical form by a venerated or holy man under Divine influence or instruction.

These religious teachings or doctrines have been revealed to many a holy man, not only in India, but in different countries of the world at different times. The aim of these revelations has been the same, that is, to enable man to guard himself against evil and do his righteous duty. They remind him that he is sent here on purpose by the absolutely Wise, Powerful and Benign Being. It is He alone who deserves all worship and adoration, and His Will be done at all costs. They have also been making it clear that man is God's vicegerent on this earth for an appointed time, with some power or *Adhikar* to manage things here. After that appointed time, he will be called back and shall have to be accountable to the Sovereign for his actions on this earth. Hence, he should exercise his authority or freedom of action in accordance with His directives. If he does so, God assures him of everlasting happiness. But if he superimposes his own desire on God's will, he is warned of a painful doom for ever. The guidance which is being conveyed to him is for his own good. Because by accepting it he adds nothing to the limitless kingdom of God and by rejecting it he deducts nothing from it. However, if he intends to benefit from Divine Guidance, he must fulfil some prerequistes thereto. The Quran, being the last and all-embracing Book of Divine Guidance indicates what these preconditions have actually been. It opens with these words:

> Alif Lam Mim. This Book, there is no doubt in it, is a guide to the God-fearing, who believe in the unseen and keep up prayer and spend out of what We have given them; who believe in that which has been revealed to you and that which was revealed before you, and they are sure of the Hereafter. These are on the right course from their Lord, and these it is that shall be successful.[5]

In other words, man can derive no benefit from this Guidance until he makes up his mind to observe piety and righteousness with fear of God. He has to believe in the Words of his Creator about all that exists beyond his own comprehension, worship Him alone and establish His worship, believe in that which has been revealed finally as well as in that which was revealed before it,

and be sure of the Hereafer, that is, the Day of Judgment of actions.

A closer study of the Gita shows that it still echoes these prerequisites for becoming dutiful or muslim to God. It lays emphasis on piety and righteous actions and cautions against the evils of desire or the *Kama*. Lord Krishna, for example, says to Arjun:

> Thus understanding Him as greater than the Reason, restraining the Self by the self, slay thou, O mighty-armed, the enemy in the form of desire, difficult to overcome.[6]

He warns him that

> He who on earth doeth not follow the wheel thus revolving, sinful of life and rejoicing in the senses, he, O son of Pritha, liveth in vain.[7]

Purification of self and observance of piety are therefore recommended:

> Yogis, having abandoned attachment perform action only by the body, by the mind, by the Reason, and even by the senses, for the purification of self.[8]

The Gita is amply articulate on the unseen realities. It preaches belief in the existence of One God and therefore seems to confirm the *Ekeshwarvad* of Islam. For example, when Arjun asks the question *Kim tad Brahma*[9] or what is that Absolute, Lord Krishna's answer to him is that the Absolute is *Pramam* or higher than all else.[10] He explains to him that by *Kshar* or perishable he means *sarvani bhutani* or all beings and by *Akshar* or the Imperishable, the *Kutasthah*, namely, the *Paramatama*, standing at the top, keeping the highest position.[11] He further affirms that "The Uttamah Purushah is verily Another, declared as the *Paramatama* ...He...the Imperishable Lord."[12]

According to the Islamic belief, God is that unseen Reality whom man cannot see with his physical eyes in this phase of life. He is *Avyaktam* or Unmanifested, *Anirdesham* or Undefinable, *Achintyam* or Unthinkable and therefore beyond man's sense perceptions.

The Gita preaches almost the same concept. It says that God is *Sukshmatvattadavijneyam* or too subtle to be perceived or known.[13] Lord Krishna seems to elucidate this point, when he says to Arjun:

> It is said that the senses are great; greater than the senses is the mind; greater than the mind is the Reason; but what is greater than the Reason, is He (The Supreme Being).[14]

It is possible for man to feel His presence by pondering over His signs in and about him. But when he attempts to encompass Him with his sense organs, he realises that He is the *Aprameya* or Immeasurable and the *Sarvashcharyamayam* or All-Wonder. A little attention to the order that prevails in the physical universe and the systematic way in which its objects are rendering service to man will lead him to conclude that God must be *Ekamadvityah* or the One without the second—He who begets not, nor is begotten, who depends on nothing but all depend on Him. It is this God that Lord Krishna, the *Purushottam* or the best of men calls the *Uttamah* Purshah and whose various Quranic attributes, he wants to explain when he says to Arjun:

> I will describe that which is to be known and by knowing which life eternal is gained. It is the Supreme Brahma Who is beginningless....[15]

He reiterates that God, "Shining with all sense-faculties, without any sense, unattached, supporting everything,[16] is indivisible and yet He seems to be divided among beings."[17] He is "enveloping all" and is "all hearing."[18] The sole Creator, Supporter and Destroyer of all,[19] He is "the light of lights, Knowledge, the object of knowledge and the goal of knowledge.[20]

Some of the attributes which Lord Krishna describes in the following shloka may well be called Islamically *sanatan*. He says that God is:

> the Seer, the Ominscient, the Ruler of all, Minuter than the Minute, the Supporter of all, of form unimaginable, refugent....[21]

He seems to be preaching against Polytheism, that is, *Shirk* or ascription of Godhead or His qualities or powers to anything else than That alone who is the "Spirit Supreme Divine." According to him man should not let his mind wander "after aught else."[21] He says that those who resort to *anyadevatah* are *hritajnanah*, that is, those whose wisdom has been rent away by *Kama*:

> They whose minds are distorted by desires resort to other gods, observing various rites, constrained by their nature.[23]

Hence, he asks Arjun to take refuge in the Supreme Being alone:

Flee unto Him for shelter with all thy being, O Bharat;
By His grace shalt thou obtain supreme peace and eternal abode.

This was in short about the *Ekeshwarvad* or belief in the One and the Only God, which is fundamental to Islam and which the Gita so manifestly preaches.

It may be interesting to note here that most of the words which Lord Krishna uses for describing the qualtities or attributes of God have their equivalents in the Islamic vocabulary.. A long list of such words may be compiled. But due to the constraints of space, I give below a few of them only:

अनुशासितारम्	the Ruler of all *Ahkamil Hakemin*
अविभक्तं	the Indivisible or the undivided *Al-Samad*
ज्योतिषाम् ज्योतिः	the Light of light *Nurun ala nur* (it is Light upon light in the Quran)
कवि	the Seer *Al basir* the Omniscient *Be Kulli sheyin Aleem*
परमम्	Higher than all else *Akbar*
सर्वस्यधातारम्[25]	the Supporter of all *Rabbul Alameen*
सर्वमावृत्य	Enveloping all *Ala Kulli sheyim Muheet*
सर्वतः श्रुतिमत्	all-Hearing *Al Sami' Al Mujib*

Belief in the Hereafter is fundamental to the teachings of Islam. According to it, this entire phenomenal system will cease to be at an appointed point of time. All living beings shall die. Then the Creator will resurrect them, evaluate their actions in this life and deliver His final Judgment. Accordingly the obedient shall be rewarded and the disobedient punished. Those who get through that Day are really successful.

The Gita has distinct echoes of this belief. For instance, Lord Krishna refers to *Pralaya* or dissolution in shlokas 2 of the 14th Discourse, and the 18th and the 19th of 8th Discourse. He further clarifies it when he says to Arjun:

> Whatever is wrought without faith, oblation, gift, austerity, or other deed, "A-sat" it is called, O Parth; it is nought here or *hereafter.*[43] (emphasis mine)

He has also defined the types of reward or retribution of actions and proclaimed that the renouncers are doomed for ever;

> Good, evil and mixed—threefold is the fruit of action *hereafter* for the non-relinquisher; but there is none ever for the renouncer.[27]

As for belief in Paradise and Hell, I have given above the shloka where Lord Krishna assures Arjun of the eternal abode of *Pram Shantim* provided that he surrenders himself *sarvabhaven* to the Supreme Being. The Paradise which Islam, or surrender of self to God, ensures to the obedient is not altogether different from that. *Salam* is the greeting of one Muslim to another. The same shall be the mode of greeting in the *Khuld-i-barin* or the *sthanam shashvatam*. All that shall come to pass there will be peaceful and no vain or sinful word shall be heard therein.[28] To this "Abode of Peace"[29] God has invited man and His messengers have been conveying this invitation to mankind from time to time. The last Prophet did the same, and I feel, Lord Krishna had probably brought the same tidings as is amply suggested by his speech :

> Those, who are freed from pride and delusion, who have conquered the evil of attachment...who are ever devoted to the Supreme Spirit...go to that eternal state.[30]

As regards Hell, the Quran has repeatedly warned that the rebels or the renouncers shall be thrown into it and they shall remain there for ever. The Gita issues the same warning :

> Bewildered by many thoughts, entangled in the meshes of delusion and addicted to the gratification of desires, they fall into a foul hell.[31]

The third prerequisite for being on the right path is to worship nothing but God the Almighty. Therefore, *Salat* or *Namaz* is the last prescribed mode of prayer in Islam. It is a practical evidence of man's belief in the Unity of God and submission to Him alone with thought, words and actions. Briefly speaking, the verses which are compulsory to recite in the prayer include :

> Praise be to Allah, Lord of the worlds, The Beneficient, the most Merciful, Master of the Day of Judgment, Thee alone do we worship and Thee alone we ask for help. *Show us the straight path, The path of those whom Thou hast favoured, Not (the path) of those who earn Thine anger Nor of those who go astray. (emphasis mine).*[32]

Among other things, bowing and prostrating before God are two of the prescribed postures of *Namaz*.

The following shlokas in the Gita contain such postures and the prayer for the way to heaven :

> Therefore *bowing* down and *prostrating* my body before Thee, Adorable Lord, I seek Thy grace. Thou, O God, shouldst bear with me as a father to his son, as a friend to his friend, as a lover to his beloved.[33]
>
> (emphasis mine)
>
> The knowers of the three Vedas who drink the soma juice and are cleaned of sin, worshipping Me with sacrifices, *pray for the way to heaven.* They reach the holy world of Indra (the lord of heaven) and enjoy in heaven the pleasures of gods.[34] (emphasis mine)

I feel that these bodily movements and praying for the way to heaven probaby formed the mode of worship of God, prescribed for the people by Lord Krishna. My inference may seem far-fetched on account of the seeming fact that these shlokas present Lord Krishna as the object of worship. But in view of the opinions of the Indian scholars that the Gita has not reached us in its authentically prestine form, the possibility that the real object of worship was the *Uttamah Purushah* in stead of the *Purushottama* cannot be easily ruled out.[35] Moreover, the Gita still bears some internal evidences in favour of this view. For instance, I refer to the shloka quoted above whereby Lord Krishna commands Arjun to seek refuge in That God alone by whose grace one obtains supreme peace and eternal abode. Further, it is now generally agreed that while the *Vidhan* or the fundamental principles of the Divine Guidance have remained unchanged, the *vidhi* or mode of observance has been slightly different in various places and at different times. I therefore infer that the above shlokas probably indicate the mode of worship of God the Supreme, which is not altogether different from *Namaz* as prescribed by Islam.

However, Islam enjoins on its followers to give to the poor and the needy a specified portion of their earnings every year. This is called *Zakat* and is as compulsory as the *Namaz* is. In point of fact, *Zakat* is a material form of worship of the Creator. In addition to paying the *Zakat* dues, a Muslim is also required to spend the surplus of his wealth on the poor and the needy. Giving that which is dearest to man for the sake of God ensures piety and righteousness :

> You cannot at all attain unto piety until you spend in the way of Allah of that which you love.[36]

From the Islamic point of view, miserliness is an ignominious and vicious tendency—the result of Satanic urges :

> The devil intimidates you that by spending you will become a pauper. He enjoins on you a shameless thing like miserliness.[37]

Those who exercise firm control over this evil tendency are declared to be successful :

> And whose is saved from his own avarice—such are successful.[38]

It has also been emphasized that spending wealth in the way of God is for man's own good. As a matter of fact all that man possesses is God-given. He is a trustee and not the actual owner of that. Moreover, if he gives it to the poor he does not enrich the Owner, nor by with-holding it does he impoverish Him. It is for his own good here and in the Hereafter. Rather, he should be thankful to God that He has chosen him to be the giver and promised to give him more in return. The Quran conveys :

> And whatever wealth you spend in charity, it is for your own good. As you spend of your wealth to win Allah's pleasure, you will be given full reward for whatever you spend and you will not be deprived in the least of your rightful due.[39]

The Muslim is forbidden to hope for anything in return from the needy recipients. He should not in any way make them feel obliged for what he gives them, nor should he humiliate or behave with them insultingly. Alms should be given for the sake of God's pleasure, and not for receiving any reward for praise or admiration from one's fellow beings. The Quran reads :

> O believers, do not spoil your charity by taunts and injury to the recipients like the one whe practises charity to be seen by men, and does not believe in Allah nor in the Lash Day. His charity may be likened to the rainfall on a rock which had only a thin layer of soil upon it. When heavy rain fell on it, the whole of the soil was washed away and the rock was left bare.[40]

It also contains this Divine Promise :

> Those who spend their wealth for the cause of Allah and afterward make not reproach and injury to follow that

> which they have spent, their reward is with their Lord, and there shall no fear come upon them, neither shall they grieve.[41]

Similarly, it has been ordained that the giver should give as alms only such things as are good and useable. Bad things or the rubbish should not be given :

> O ye who believe ! Spend of the good things which you have earned, and of that which We bring forth from the earth for you and seek not the bad to spend thereof.[42]

Whereas the Muslim is required to provide food and clothes even for the wicked, he is forbidden to give anything to anyone for the gratification of evil desires. Hence, he will not give anything even to his own brother who wants to have narcotics, for instance, or the pleasures of the red-light districts. The Quran contains specific instructions to this effect :

> Do not hand over to the foolish your wealth which Allah has made a means of maintaining yourself, but give them out of it for feeding and clothing them.[43]

The message which Lord Krishna has delivered to mankind is not altogether different. He lays emphasis on making sacrifice for others and condemns selfishness :

> The good people who eat what is left from sacrifice are released from all sins but those wicked people who prepare food for their own sake—verily they eat sin.[44]

Similarly, alms should be given without expecting anything in return from the recipients :

> That alms which is given to one who does nothing in return, believing that a gift ought to be made, in a fit place and time, to a worthy person, that alms is accounted pure.[45]

He further explains it :

> That which is given with a view to receiving in return or looking for fruit again, or grudgingly, that alms is accounted of passion.[46]

He also makes it clear that giving money for evil purposes or spending it on unworthy person, at immoral places or giving it to the poor insultingly, is *Tamasic* and therefore condemnable :

> That alms which is given at unfit place and time, and to unworthy persons, disrespectfully and contemptuously, that is declared of darkness,[47]

It is remarkable here that neither the Quran names the needy as Nuruddin, nor the Gita as Dharam Prakash. Both of them judge man by the nature of his need and the quality of his deed.

According to the Islamic system of thought, the physical functions of every object of creation have been predetermined. Hence the sun, the moon, the earth and others go by God's inexorable Decree. They cannot but do His bidding, for they are made to be dutiful or muslim to Him. Almost similar is man's position in this scheme of elemental predestination. Being a part of this physical universe, he is anatomically bound to obey the Creator. For example, his hand cannot see and his eyes cannot hear. They are bound to do their preordained functions. Similarly, the colour of his skin, hair and eyes, the shape of his nose and ears, the height and weight of his body, the time and place of his birth and death and so on are predestinated to be as they are. In spite of this physical predestination, however, man is not merely a marionette or a piece of wood. He is God's masterpiece and vicegerent on this earth. He has been endowed with prudence, discrimination and moral consciousness. Though he *functions* as pre-ordained, he does *act* consciously and willingly too. In other words, the principle of predestination almost ceases to operate in his moral province. God has not predetermined his moral inclinations or intentions. Rather he has granted him liberty to act at pleasure or do what he likes. That is to say, man wields *Ikhtiyar* or *Adhikar* of pursuing either the right or the wrong course of living. Lord Krishna's words कर्मण्येवाधिकरस्ते, or to action alone has thou a right seem to echo the Islamic concept of freewill or man's freedom of action in the moral sphere of his life. Of course, the *Rajas* or the energy to move is not generated by man himself. But he is free to use this energy either for the *Sattvic* or for the *Tamasic* ends. According to the Quran, the Master has pointed out the right and the wrong ways of morality[41] and the Prophet is asked to proclaim the freedom of man's will :

> And say : the truth is from your Lord: so let him who please believe, and let him who please disbelieve.[50]

And, here is Lord Krishna speaking to Arjun towards the end of *the Gita* :

> Thus has wisdom more secret than all secrets been decla-

> red to thee by me. Having reflected on it fully do as thou choosest.[51]

Both Islam and the Gita disapprove of monasticism or the ascetic mode of life. Lord Krishna in the Gita proclaims :

> Man winneth nor freedom from action by abstaining from activity, nor by mere renunciation doth he rise to perfection.[52]

He therefore prohibits ascetic practices :

> That austerity which is done under a deluded understanding with self-torture, or with the object of destroying another, that is declared of darkness.[53]

According to him renunciation of life emanates from hypocrisy. He seems to be defining a recluse when he says :

> Who sitteth, controlling the organs of action, but dwelling in his mind on the objects of the senses, that bewildered man is called a hypocrite.[54]

Both Islam and the Gita recommend a moderate way of life. They lay stress on man's living in human society and using judiciously all that this world offers, but with the consciousness that enjoyment of the senses is not the ultimate end of life. He should neither have unbreakable attachment with this world nor should he renounce or despise it as something sinful and abhorable. The Gita says :

> But the disciplined self, moving among sense objects with senses free from attraction and repulsion mastered by the Self, goeth to Peace.[55]

Islam also does not prevent man from making use of this world. Rather, it teaches him the practical way of living. Hence, it rejects *Rahbaniyat* or monasticism. The Quran informs us that the belief in the renunciation of life is man's own invention. It has never been prescribed for him by the Creator :

> And verily We sent Noah and Abraham and We gave to their offspring the (gift of) prophecy and the Book; so there are among them those who go aright, and most of them are transgressors. Then we made Our messengers to follow in their footsteps, and We sent Jesus son of Mary afterwards, and We gave him the Gospel; and We put in the heartt of those who followed him kindness and mercy; *But monasticism they invented—We did not prescribe it to them.*[56] (emphasis mine).

The Prophet has made it clear that there is no monasticism in Islam. He has therefore ordained the Muslims to live amidst human beings and make efforts for their good and well-being. It should be done for the sake of obtaining blessings from God, without desiring any reward from other human beings.

Both Islam and the Gita stand for making struggle against evil within and without. Islam enjoins on its followers to fight against evil and promote good in the world. It is the duty or the *swadharma* of a Muslim to rise body and soul against iniquity, vice and violence. He must eliminate them at all costs.

Almost identical is the message of the Gita. The situation in which Arjun is placed has rather universal and almost timeless proportions. Among other things, it represents the trial of man's love for righteousness and his will to choose and do. Kurukshetra is man himself, besieged by the evil forces within and without himself. It is here that he must demonstrate his voluntary faith in righteousness and will to put his *rajoguna* to the *sattvic* use. The two warring factions of the Pandava and the Kaurava stand for the principles of good and evil, right and wrong or seeing and not-seeing the truth. It is his duty to fight against the blind *Kama* on the inner as well as the outer fronts in order to sustain the seeing *Pandava* or the quality of judging things in the right perspective. He must eliminate the *Kauravas*, the embodiment of vice, violence and injustice. This is the right *Jnana* of how *guna guneshu vartante*[57] and the right way of holding the *indriyani indriyartheshu*.[58]

As stated above, this situation transcends cultural and geographical bounds. It is not Arjun alone that has to face it. It is the lot of every sensible man—every Hamlet on this earth. It was almost the same situation that arose before the Muslims at the battle of *Badr* when the Prophet and the handful of his companions had to fight against their own kith and kin. This battle in in which father fought against his son and brother against his brother was as usual a trial of the Muslims to prove whether or not their claims to righteousness in obedience to God were true.

It is this struggle against evil or war for the sake of righteousness which Lord Krishna proclaims to be Arjun's duty or *swadharma*. For instance, when Arjun vacillates between to be or not to be, Lord Krishna argues with him :

> Further, looking to thine own duty, thou shouldst not tremble, for there is nothing more welcome to a Kshatriya than righteous war.[59]

And then he commands him :

जहि शत्रुं महाबाहो कामरूपम् दुरासदम्[60]
Slay thou O mighty armed, the enemy
in the form of desire difficult to overcome.

This स्वधर्मम्, this धर्म्याद्धि युद्धात् and this imperative जहि, may well explain the meaning of *Jehad* in Islam. *Jehad* or struggle against moral corruption and iniquity is the *swadharma* of those who call themselves dutiful to God. The last Book of Guidance as well as the Prophet gives specific guidelines as to how to wage this war, how to treat the wounded and the dead, what to do with their properties, how to behave with the prisoners of war, old men, women and children and so on, with the unequivocal injunction against any sort of sacrilege.

It is therefore incumbent upon the Muslim to save himself and other innocent creatures of God from the evils of lust, violence and iniquity. If these evil forces are *durasadam* or too difficult for him to overcome by way of persuasion, he must take up sword against them. But for this righteous cause, the shedding of human blood is strictly prohibited in Islam. The Quran contains repeated warnings even against coercive proselytism. As for killing a human being it contains, for example, this Divine injunction :

> For that cause We decreed for the Children of Israel that whosoever killeth a human being for other than manslaughter or corruption in the earth, it shall be as if he had killed all mankind, and who saveth the life of one, it shall be as ifhe had saved the life of all mankind. Our messengers came upto them of old with clear proofs (of Allah's sovereignty) but afterwards, lo ! many of them became prodigals in the earth.[61]

At another place in the Quran, the Messenger is asked to proclaim :

> Say : Come, I will recite unto you that which your Lord hath made a sacred duty for you : that ye ascribe nothing as partner unto Him and that ye do good to parents, and that ye slay not your children (for fear) of poverty—We provide for you and for them—and that ye draw not nigh to lewd things whether open or concealed. And that ye slay not the life which Allah hath made sacred, save in the course of justice. This he hath commanded you, in order that ye may discern,[62]

According to the Prophet, killing the innocent is the most heinous sin. Such cases will be taken up for decision first of all on the Day of Judgement. Therefore he has repeatedly urged on the Muslims to pay respect to human life and save it from destruction of all sorts.

It is therefore evident that, like the Gita, Islam also permits the use of sword *paritaranaya sadhunam vinashaya dushkritam* and *dharmasansthapanarthaya*,[63] that is to say, for the protection of the righteous, for the destruction of evil-doers and for the establishment of righteousness. Can the kindness of a surgeon's knife be condemned ?

Anyway, according to the last prerequisite stated above, it is the duty of a Muslim to believe in that which has been revealed to the last Prophet as well as in that which has been revealed to all the prophets before him.[64] In other words, the Quran confirms the birth of various prophets before the Prophet Muhammad and ordains its followers not to differentiate between them :

> Say : We believe in Allah and what has been revealed to us, and what was revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and what was given to Moses and Jesus and to the prophets from their Lord; we do not make any distinction between any of them, and to Him do we submit.[65]

These prophets and messengers were born in various countries of the world and in different times. All of them were human beings, chosen by the Creator to show the right path to mankind. They obeyed His instructions themselves and taught and communicated them to their respective generations. The Quran informs :

> ...and there is not a nation but a warner hath passed among them.[66]

Addressing the Prophet, the Master says :

> Verily, We revealed to thee as We revealed to Noah and the prophets after him as We revealed to Abraham and Ishmael and Isaac and Jacob and the tribes, and Jesus and Job and Jonah and Aaron and Solomon, and as We revealed unto David the Psalms; And messengers We have mentioned unto thee before and messengers We have not mentioned unto thee and Allah spake directly unto Moses.[67]

The Gita seems to suggest this series of prophethood and Divine Guidance when it reads :

> Whenever there is a decline of righteousness and rise of unrighteousness, O Bharata, then I create a soul.[68]

It may not be unworthy of note here that the same thing has been expressed in the *Shrimad Bhagavad* in these words :

> Whenever there is the decline of virtue and growth of sin, Hari, the God of gods indeed creates a soul.[69]

As the sacred scriptures of various Indian religions suggest it, many a prophet of God may have been born in this ancient religious country. I have already explained that the *Bhagavats* were those holy persons who, under divine influence, declared to their people the *gita* or religious teachings and doctrines. It may be observed that this word *Bhagavat* is found prefixed to the important chapters of many religious scriptures in India. For example, it is prefixed respectfully to the titles of the sacred books of the Buddhists. The 5th of the twelve sacred scriptures of the Jainas is named *Bhagavaty-anga* or *Bhagavaty-angam*. The 73rd chapter of the *Uttara-Khanda* or the 5th part of the *Padma Purana* is called *Bhagavad-archana-prastava* and its 78th chapter is called *Bhagava-darchana-mahatmya*. In the same way, *Bhagavad-upanayan* is the name of the 100 and 101st chapters of the 4th part of the *Brahma-vaivarta Purana* and its 57th chapter of 4th part is named *Bhagavad-guna-varnana*.

These are some of the instances which indicate that the divine "teachings or doctorines" have been conveyed to the people of India by a number of *Bhagavats* in the past. Lord Krishna is one them, as is suggested by the word *Bhagavat* prefixed to his discourses.

The Gita, which is under my focus, however, does not end merely on these Islamic prerequisites for benefitting from the Divine Guidance. It also highlights some of the *sanatan* values of Islam. Its emphasis on controlling the *Kama* or evil desire, its directive to observe patience, its stress on the purification of thought, word and action, moderation and unselfishness, suppression of pride and abstenance from sinful acts, are all in perfect accord with the teachings of Islam and, for that matter, all the religious scriptures available in the world.

Therefore I would like to conclude that Islam began with the first man on this earth and Books of Divine Guidance were revea-

led to many a prophet and messenger throughout the world. The Gita is one of the landmarks in the history of this *sanatan* religion. The Quran is the last Book of Divine Guidance containing, among other things, the codes of practical living, which are in perfect accord with human nature. It lays repeated stress on logical thinking about the facts of life as well as probing into the universe for the purpose of physical and spiritual benefit of mankind.

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1. *The Gita*, 2 : 6.
2. *Ibid.*, 2 : 7.
3. *Ibid.*, 13 : 17.
4. Ibid,, Taitriya Upanishad, 2 : 1.
5. *The Quran*, 2 : 1–5.
6. *The Gita*, 3 : 43.
7. *The Gita*, 3 : 16.
8. *Ibid.*, 5 : 11.
9. *Ibid.*, 8 : 1.
10. *Ibid.*, 8 : 3. This word *Paramam* or the higher than all else may be translated into Arabic as *Akbar* meant for God.
11. *Ibid.*, 15 : 16.
12. Uttamah purushas tv anyah paramatme'ty udahrtah
yo lokatrayam avishya vibhartyavyaya ishvarah. Ibid. 15 : 17.
13. *The Gita*, 13 : 15.
14. *Ibid.*, 3 : 42.
15. *Ibid.*, 13 : 12.
16. *Ibid.*, 13 : 14.
17. *Ibid.*, 13 : 16.
18. *The Gita*, 13 : 13.
19. *Ibid.*, 13 : 16.
20. *Ibid.*, 13 : 17.
21. *Ibid.*, 8 : 9.
22. *Ibid.*, 8 . 8.
23. *Ibid.*, 7 : 20.
24. *Ibid.*, 18 : 62.
25. The word *Dhataram* or *Dhatri* is from the Sanskrit root *dha*. In the Vedic period, *Dhatri* is said to have stood for the name of a divine being, a conception of various qualities and functions, who was considered to be the creator, supporter, maintainer, preserver of all things. He was not placed in a distinct and definite nitche in the Hindu mythological system and his name was not mentioned in the older hymns of the Rig Veda. He began to be invoked from the tenth Mandala of the Rig Veda and thereafter was associated with Tvashtri, Prajapati and others.

26. *The Gita*, 17 : 28.
27. *Ibid.*, 18 : 12.
28. *The Quran*, 56 : 25–26.
29. *Ibid.*, 10 : 25.
30. *The Gita*, 15 : 5.
31. *Ibid.*, 16 : 16.
32. *The Quran*, Chapter I.
33. *The Gita*, 11 : 44.
34. *Ibid.*, 9 : 23.
35. Dittakavi Subrahmanya Sarma states in his article on *the Bhagavad Gita* :

> "On the field of battle the discourse must obviously have been a brief one. Vyasa, the traditional author of the Mahabharata, writing probably about the 5th century B. C., expanded it a little, and perhaps some additions were made later."

Encyclopaedia Britannica, Vol. III (1963), p. 563. Almost similar is the opinion of Dr. Radhakrishnan who writes in his Introduction to *the Bhagavad Gita* :

> Its date may be assigned to the fifth century B. C., though the text may have received many alterations in subsequent times.
> S. Radhakrishnan, ed., *The Bhagavad Gita* (Bombay : Blackie & Son, 1983), p. 14.

36. *The Quran*, 3 : 92.
37. *Ibid.*, 2 : 198.
38. *Ibid.*, 59 : 9.
39. *The Quran*, 2 : 272.
40. *Ibid.*, 2 : 264.
41. *Ibid.*, 2 : 262.
42. *Ibid.*, 2 : 267.
43. *The Quran*, 4 : 5.
44. *The Gita*, 3 : 13.
45. *Ibid.*, 17 : 20.
46. *Ibid.*, 17 : 21.
47. *The Gita*, 17 : 22.
48. *The Gita*, 2 : 47.
49. *The Quran*, 90 : 10.
50. *Ibid.*, 18 : 29.
51. *The Gita*, 18 : 63.
52. *The Gita*, 3 : 4.
53. *Ibid.*, 17 : 19.
54. *Ibid.*, 3 : 6.
55. *Ibid.*, 2 : 64.
56. *The Quran*, 57 : 26–27.
57. *The Gita*, 3 : 28.
58. *Ibid.*, 5 : 9.
59. *The Gita*, 2 : 31.
60. *Ibid.*, 3 : 43.

61. *The Quran*, 5 : 32.
The Quranic word which has been translated as corruption in this quotation is *Fasad*, which is now generally known as riot.
62. *Ibid.*, 6 : 151.
63. *The Gita*, 4 : 8.
64. According to the Prophet, more or less 1,24,000 prophets and messengers were born before him.
65. *The Quran*, 3 : 83.
66. *The Quran*, 35 : 24.
67. *Ibid.*, 4 : 163–64.
68. *The Gita*, 4 : 7.
69. *Shrimad Bhagavata Mahapurana* (Gita Press), 9 : 24 : 56.

Charu Sheel Singh

BHAGAVADGITA, TYPOLOGY AND WILLIAM BLAKE

Bhagavadgita is a landmark in the tradition of religious and philosophical texts of India which has a very distinguished history of its exegesis and translation, both native[1] and foreign. Warren Hastings, in his letter to Nathaniel Smith Esquire, wrote : "Every instance which brings their real character home to observation will impress us with a more generous sense of feeling for their natural rights, and teach us to estimate them by the measure of our own. But such instances can only be obtained in their writings : and these will survive when the British dominion in India shall have long ceased to exist, and when the sources which it once yielded of wealth and power are lost to remembrance."[2] One is tempted to quote further from Warren Hastings' letter : "With the deductions or rather qualifications, which I have thus permitted, I hesitate not to pronounce the Geeta, a performance of great originality; of a sublimity of conception, reasoning, and diction, almost unequalled; and a single exception, among all the known religions of mankind, of a theology accurately corresponding with that of the Christian dispensation, and most powerfully illustrating its fundamental doctrines."[3] Warren Hastings was probably the first European to have drawn our attention to the *literary* merits of the Gita, which no native commentator cared to talk about in a unified manner. During the course of his brief letter Hastings also compares the best translated verses of the Gita with those of *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. Such references are also made by other contemporary indologists notably J.Z. Holwell (1771-1798), Alexander Dow (1735 ? 36-1779), William Jones (1748-1794), and Charles Wilkins (1749-1836).[4] The Gita underwent translation in many languages. A French translation appeared in 1787.[5] Dara Shukoh (1615-59), the eldest son of Shah Jahan, had a large number of manuscriptis

in his possession, including those of the Upanishads and the Bhagavadgita, and translated them into Persian in his *Sirr-i-Akbar* (1657).[6] It was with Charles Wilkins's translation that Blake and other poets of the Romantic period—Wordsworth, Coleridge, Shelley, among others, were familiar. I shall not go into the history of the translations of the Gita and the nature of its adaptations which is a subject in itself. I shall make, however, a singular contention here that of the literary borrowings of the Gita by Romantic poets, those of Wordsworth and Shelley have mainly been ideational and phrasal. Coleridge has deeply imbibed the insights of the Gita and has made a very profound and subtle use of them in his theory of poetry and literary criticism in his *Biographia Literaria*. Blake alone has understood the structural (typological) and ontosemantic implications of the Gita. One important use of the Gita Blake made was its typological division of labour, society and human psychosomatic organism. This he enlarges from mimetic to mythic, symbolical and allegorical modes of the transcreation of beauty. Moreover, such categories appeared in the Gita much before the Marxist, Freudian, and Jungian psycho-analytic categories came on the scene. The first section of this paper will focus attention on typology in itself and in Gita rnd Blake; the second section will see typological phenomenon manifested in Blake's major poems, while the third and final section will gather findings, offer conclusions, and discuss the vital question of Blake's tradition.

I

I begin by quoting Gerhard von Rad's remarks on typology which consider typology as a natural form of human thought, taking typology out of purely scriptural, exegetical realm :

> What we are accustomed to understand under the heading of typology is, in a broad sense, by no means a specifically theological concern or, indeed, a peculiarity of ancient oriental thought. Rather, typological thinking is an elementary function of all human thought and information... And, above all, without this interpretive, analogical sort of thinking there would be no poetry. The fact goes ceaselessly to and fro ; he sees the often insignificant, obvious things and recognizes in them ultimate values. In the movements of the elements, the passing of the years and days, in the most elementary rela-

> tionships of man with man, in simple mechanical performances—in everything regularity reveals itself, in which the smallest as well as the greatest things participate.[7]

If we compare the New Testament with the Old, which in themselves are two types (Old & New), we find that the "old" types, shadows, and figures, find a recurring appearance in the prophets of the New Testament, and in fact, Christ is the seminal messiah figure who fulfils the Jewish and Christian prophecies and brings the cycle to completion. St. Paul, Origen of Alexandria, and St. Augustine, are three other seminal figures in Western tradition whose models later Christian exegetes have followed. St. Paul developed the story of Hager/Ishmael and Sara/Isaac in Galatians 4 : 22 ff., and described the wanderings of Israelites in wilderness as a "type" for his own generation (Corinthians 10 : 1 ff). St. Paul even described the veil on Moses' face (Exodus 34 : 33-35) as a veil which still covers the Jewish understanding of scripture but is removed by the Christian experience and the "new covenant." Origen saw the hermeneutical division between letter and spirit in terms of anthropological division of body and soul, applying it to the Old and New Testaments. This exegesis points towards leaving the body and attaining to spirit which alone can point us to the holy language visible everywhere.[8] St. Augustine's book *De Doctrina Christiana* included seven rules for figurative interpretation, earlier formulated by the Donatist Tyconius. As per this theory biblical words and things they signified became figures of higher spiritual reality beneath the literal. Augustine even identified the "letter" with the "law" which kills by demanding righteousness for this is the only way sin could be overcome.

In the Indian tradition Bhagavadgita is the climax of typological thinking and is a creative and scholarly blending of mythological, theistic, monotheistic, and even ritualistic trends prevalent during and prior to the period of its writing. There are four *Vedas*, each sub-divided into three strata—*samhita*, *brahmana*, and *upanishad*. The *Rig Vedic* aesthetics is invocatory and functional. The gods are invoked; the idea is not the attainment of godhood but the bestowing of material prosperity and protection from natural calamities. The form could well be called lyrical. The lyric avoids the logic of higher syntax and evolves paratactical succession of passionately organised sentences. The "subject" *surrenders* to the

"object" in the *Vedic* hymns.[9] In the *Vedas*, the "subject" who was an article of desire, is denuded of material concomitants and becomes *Atman* during the *Upanishadic* period. It is not a multitude of gods that the subject is encountering but the soleness (wholeness) of *Brahman*. The *Atman* seeks its own definition, reality, and source, by identifying itself with *Brahman*. The duality of subject and object is fused each in the other in the silence that is its own language and the language that is its own silence. The dialectical nature of many of the *Upanishads* makes for a dialogical climate and the question-answer form does not lead to a disjunctive synthesis, as perhaps is the case with Hegel, but an obliteration of the very nature of bi-focal vision into a subsuming synthesis. The functional typology of the *Vedas* changes its course from being centrifugal to becoming centripetal. The climax point in the centripetal nature of Being is *Bhagavadgita*, where centripetal vision becomes a mythological reality encompassing the visible and the invisible worlds in a single body that is Krishna the God incarnate.

The typological dimensions of the Gita are epical in nature and character. The divisoin of huminity into the *sattvic*, the *rajasic*, and the *tamasic* components finds many a parallel in Western psychology and philosophy. Freud's *id*, *ego* and *super-ego*; Sartre's Being-for-itself, Being-for-others, and Being-in-itself-and-for-itself, are notable examples. The key verse in the Gita is 3·42, where at the root are the senses; higher than the senses is the mind; higher than the mind is the soul; what is higher than the soul is designated as "he."[10] The typological structure we get thus is a four tier universe which can be variously imagined—as for example in the form of three concentric circles intersecting each other at vital points and all uniformally meeting at the centre that is *Atman*—their source and identity. The circumference of the circle is obviously the source of hallucinations, day-dreaming, etc. We are obviously caught by a universe that has a certain veil over its substance—the logic of constant and variations as Henry Bergson said of his own theory of creative evolution. The medieval theory of the four senses of the scriptures is a variation upon the same archetypal mode of thinking. Robert Hollander points out: "The standard medieval theory of the four senses of Scripture only expands the literal-spiritual division by naming three specific modes of the spiritual goal (allegory or typology=*cre-*

denda; tropology or moralitas=agenda; anagogy or eschatology=*speranda*)."[11]

In his 1809 exhibition of paintings *A Descriptive Catalogue* Blake placed at no. X the paintings which he titled "The Bramins.—A Drawing." Blake wrote :

> The subject is, Mr. Wilkins translating the Geeta; an ideal design, suggested by the first publication of that part of the Hindoo Scriptures translated by Mr. Wilkins. I understand that my Costume is incorrect, but in this I plead the authority of the ancients, who often deviated from the Habits to preserve the Manners, as in the instance of Laocoon, who, through a priest, is represented naked.[12]

Northrop Frye, who makes many valuoble references to *Bhagavadgita* in relation to Blake in his seminal study *Fearful Symmetry*, wrote : "New contributions were pouring in from as far afield as Persia and India, and Blake was among the first of European Idealists able to link his own tradition of thought with the *Bhagavadgita*."[13] In 1819 and 1820, Blake was painting a series of visionary heads for John Varley, who had funded the English School of Water-Colour Painters. Frye says that one of the heads is a "vaguely Oriental-looking creature,"[14] who I think is possibly Indian, whom Blake called his "spiritual preceptor."[15] Of his 1809 exhibition mentioned earlier, Blake sent a copy to Ozias Humphry (who had spent a few years in India and would appreciate the oriental aspects of Blake's work) "with a ticket of admission if you would honour my exhibition with a visit."[16]

In *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, etched about 1790-1793, which is Blake's earlier stand on many philosophical problems and typological mythology, Blake wrote in Plate 10 : "The head Sublime, the heart Pathos, the genitals Beauty, the hands and feet Proportion."[17] Illustrating this, Magaret Rudd has made a very interesting chart at the end of her book.[18] Blake's classification is to be compared with the Gita's verse 3.42 already quoted. Blake was intending to give an entirely new mythology to the people of the world.[19] On the most ancient mythology Blake wrote: "No man can believe that either Homer's mythology, or Ovid's, were the production of Greece or of Latium, neither will any one believe that the Greek statues as they are called, were the invention of Greek Artists; perhaps the Torso is the only

original work remaining; all the rest are evidently copies, though fine ones, from greater works of the Asiatic Patriarchs."[20]

Such conclusions of Blake are based upon his readings of indologists already mentioned, especially Jacob Bryant, whose *Ancient Mythology*, he refers to in connection with is All-Religions-Are-One-Thesis.[21] Sir William Jones and Charles Wilkins were elected to the Royal Society in 1772 and 1788. Blake received his only education from James Basire, who was an official engraver to the Society of Antiquaries and to the Royal Society. It is here that there is a possibility of Blake having met Jones and Wilkins. Blake had even painted William Jones as A. J. Arbery tells us in his book *British Orientalists*. In *A Descriptive Catalogue*, at no. V, Blake placed the painting of "The Ancient Britons," prefacing it with: "In the last Battle of king Arthur, only Three Britons escaped; these were the Strongest Man, the Beautifullest Man, and the Ugliest Man..."[22] Elaborating upon these Blake wrote: "The Strong Man represents the human sublime. The beautiful Man represents the human pathetic, which was in the Wars of Eden divided into male and female. The Ugly Man represents the human reason. They were originally one man, who was fourfold; he was sub-divided, and his real humanity slain on the stems of generation, and the form of the fourth was like the Son of God."[23]

S. Foster Damon was the earliest Blake critic who pointed out that "Blake is even in accord with Estern mysticism; Urthona is Dharma; Urizen, Karma; while both Tharmas and Luvah are included in Maya.[24] These three in Gita's terminology, are known as the *sattvika*, the *rajasika*, and the *tamasika* men—men of goodness, passion and darkness. Of Blake's mention of the fourfold Man who was originally one, we refer to the following from the *Purush-Sukta* of the *Rig Veda*:

> Purusha himself is the whole (universe), whatever has been and whatever shall be...With three quarters Purusha mounted upwards. A quarter of him was again produced here...When the gods performed the sacrifice, with Purusha as the oblation, the spring was its butter, the summer its fuel, and the autumn its (accompanying) offering.[25]

Blake's Albion, Hebrew Adam Kadmon, nnd Krishna of the Gita are variations upon the same Primal Man myth.[26] Blake's characters in the prophecies are Urthona—the unmanifest self

(*Atman*), whose temporal manifestation is Los; Urizen—the Strong Man (buddhi), soul of the Gita, and Tharmas (*tamas*), sense of the Gita. In themselves they form a cycle and sum up Blake's entire natural, psychological, social and poetic, typological system. They are even the source of Northrop Frye's entire critical system. Frye calls himself a Blakean critic precisely for this reason. The following chart will make Blake's typological scheme clear.

II

The disturbance in the hierarchical order of the scheme of the fourfold, results in the disintegration of the being of Albion the Primal Man in *Vala, Or The Four Zoas* (1795–1804) :

...One dread morn of gory blood
The manhood was divided, for the gentle passions,
making way
Thro' the infinite labyrinths of the heart & thro'
the nostrils issuing
In odorous stupefaction, stood before the Eyes of Man
A female bright. (VIIa. 278-82)

Blake's personified psychic faculties have all 'emanated' from the body of the Primal Man. Krishna declares the world to be an 'emanation' of his supreme will. In *The Four Zoas*, Urthona (self, *Atman*), loses control over his emanations—mostly female consorts, who, otherwise, are the symbols of creative power, as in the Gita. The concept of 'emanation' is also found in Gnostic legends. In their proper places, Urizen should be subordinate to Urthona (Los); Luvah to Urizen and Tharmas to Luvah. Each of these four zoas have also their female consorts—imaginative portions—harmony with whom determines the degree and intensity of their integrity. Here typology gets metaphysical overtones as it is not simply about types we are talking about, but male and female as one yet distinct entities; Los, Urizen, Luvah and Tharmas, not as representing four human faculties, but as four ways of looking at the objective world by a single man who is Albion. Typology is an essential way for developing a point of view, and this Blake does by making the four characters 'emanate' from the body of Albion. The fall, however, is implicit in the fact that Albion has not exercised his creative power in 'creating' those characters; the characters have sprung on their own to satisfy their vaulting ambitions which constitute of a desire to rule over others. This is how Luvah (mind) suggests the first

mischief. He tells Urizen:

> I will remain as well as Thou, & here with the hands of blood
> Smite this dark sleeper in his tent, then try my strength with thee. (I. 512-13)

In the Fall stage, typological functions are inverted. Los alone (temporal manifestation of Urthona) is able to keep up to his nature and it is he who is responsible for the regeneration of Albion's being.

In *Milton*, the dismemberment is celebrated in terms of the inversion of typological functions again. The three classes typified by the *sattva*, the *rajas*, and the *tamas*, are represented by Rintrah (Blake's version of Indra)[27], Palamabron and Satan. Satan refuses to do his own work and usurps the functions of Palamabron. Chaos ensues. Typological dimensions multiply to infinity as the idea of Satan becomes a concept containing twenty-seven churches (as Blake numbered them with the beginning of history), the perverted order of society, and the infernal trinity of Bacon, Newton and Locke. Blake says:

> Three Classes are created by the Hammer of Los & Woven
> By Enitharmon's Looms...(I. 26-27).

Blake makes Satan the Elect; Palamabron the Redeemed, and Rintrah the Reprobate. This was only expected for otherwise it was not possible to describe a typologically disordered society. In the Gita, the worst thing a man can do is to usurp another's function: "The duties of a man's own particular calling, although not free from faults, is far preferable to the duty of another, let it ever be so well pursued. A man by following the duties which are appointed by his birth, doeth no wrong."[28]

Associated with typology is the transmigratory process. The world becomes cyclic indefinitely if one changes one's work not suited to one's nature. Blake's continual creation of Satan symbolizes this. Milton the poet could not achieve salvation because he could not enlighten the world which was looking towards him as its leader. In order to break the cyclic rhythm and climb atop the spiral, it was necessary for Milton to redeem his past associations (including his sixfold emanation—three wives and three daughters). As a result Blake makes Milton descend (Satan and Satanic forces are Miltonic Selfhood) into the infernal world of ours and redeem us from the memory of a

ghostly past into an idealized garden of imaginative wholeness. Milton also sets right the function of each of the characters and that is how order and balance is restored in the poem. *Milton* is a more functional poem than *The Four Zoas* where characters are psychic events. Luvah, in the latter poem, is the lineament of desire who disrupts the original harmony, while in *Milton* it is the instinct for usurpation which dissipates the unitive process and vision of life.

Jerusalem shows typological disturbance and resultant psychic, social, and historical disintegration at the widest and deepest levels. The poem is divided into the logic of the four—the Public, the Jews, the Deists and the Christians. These are parts of the body that is Albion the Primal Man. Next we see how typological dimensions extend in terms of direction, space, width and depth. Albion is said to have twelve daughters who are the emanations of his twelve sons. Moreover, each of Albion's sons is associated with a county or city of England, corresponding simultaneously, with a city or province in the biblical world. The entire Judeau-Christian tradition is presented in the flash of a moment while geographical places change names and identities with characters and vice versa. The method could best be called kaleidoscopic, and in a world where typological disorder has confused the understanding of man, it takes a visionary like Los to gather pears of his concentration to set things right. A single example of disruption should suffice. Behold Los exclaiming :

> Eternity look'd upon deformity, & loveliness as a dry tree
> I saw disease forming a Body of Death around the Lamb
> Of God to destroy Jerusalem & to devour the body of
> Albion,
> By war & strategem...(*Jerusalem* I. 9. 8–11).

III

Analogy and allegory to which typology in Blake often leads to, have more organisational function to perform. Typology in Blake is a great deal secularised though it tends to invite comparisons with religion.[29] Moreover, it is not typology as a dry structural device that Blake makes use of. He associates it with myth which he claims is entirely new to the inhabitants of the earth. As Paul J. Korshin tells us :

> While the early Fathers believed in the literal truth of the texts with which they dealt, the application of typology and the search for hidden types in them suddenly trans-

> formed them to the status of myths. An allegorist like Oriegan, for example, was able to create an entirely separate narrative account of and meaning for numerous biblical texts by the use of typology; the literal Bible was seen to harbor a hidden and secret story with its own arcane meaning.[30]

It is difficult to say whether Blake was familiar with the Biblical exegetical tradition, typological or literal; nevertheless he was preoccupied with a fourfold vision right from the time he wrote *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* (begun 1789) upto nearly the end of his career. In a letter to Butts, Blake wrote :

> Now I a fourfold vision see,
> And a fourfold vision is given to me;
> 'Tis fourfold in my supreme delight
> And threefold in soft Beulah's night
> And twofold always. May God us keep
> From Single vision & Newton's sleep.[31]

Stimulated by Blake's fourfold scheme, S. Foster Damon quotes extensively from an eleventh century Hindu drama, *Prabodhchandrodaya*, written by Krishna Misra. Damon says that this drama was translated into English in 1811, a translation Blake might have read,[32] as he continued to work on most of his prophecies till 1829. Blake postulated an hierarchy of existence in which man's soul corresponded with the world of Beulah, his mind with the world of generation, and his senses with the world of Ulro. Eden, however, was open only to visionaries and it contained a fourfold vision. The first three visions belong respectively to Blake's the Strong, the Beautiful, and the Ugly Man, whom I have identified with the three *gunas* of the Gita. Tharmas cannot break the prison-house of his own ego. He is Blake's Ugly Man. Above this Ugly Man is the inhabitant of a better world of Generation, the man of Burke's hypothesis, who delights in keeping the observer and the observed separate. This is the man who has passed from memory to sight, the tablet of energy, who, if unguided, may bring self-ruin. Above this man is the *sattvika* man, the contemplative, who has passed from sight to vision into imagination, the divine body in every man. Damon, who first noticed this identification, wrote : "From other references to the Goon, it appears that they correspond almost precisely to the three lower zoas : Satwo being Urizen, Raja being Luvah, and Tama being Tharmas. The fourth and highest zoa, Urthona, is the 'incorruptible spirit'"...[33]

The first three zoas have their roots in nature, while the divine fourth is in direct touch with God. The first three constitute what Frye calls the world of becoming, while the fourth is the world of Being. Krishna declares in the Gita : "I plant myself on my own nature, and create, again and again, this assemblage of beings "[34] In consonance with this emanation of the whole mighty hosts of beings (G. 9·8) Blake wrote : "Jesus is surrounded by Beams of Glory in which are seen all around him Infants emanating from him;...In Eternity woman is the Emanation of Man; she has No Will of her own. There is no such thing in Eternity as a female Will."[35] In the Gita, this female will is subservient to the will of God, Moreover, Blake's interpretation of the character of Jesus or of Christianity often reduces itself to the dialectic of 'Selfhood' and 'Self.' Middleton Murry says :

> It is this pulsing, all-pervading, all—vivifying power of Blake's Christianity which distinguishes it from any modern form of Christianity with which I am familiar... Blake's Christianity springs from the identity of Self-annihilation, and Forgiveness, as constant and immediate experience. Total Self annihilation, total Forgiveness—these are not the sources of any Christianity, which finds currency in the world today It is not surprizing shat Blake's Christianity should be seldom understood. It is centered in the great doctrine of Self-annihilation; and doctrine is not easy to understand.[36]

Earlier, T.S. Eliot had already placed Blake outside of all tradition claiming that Blake's philosophy, like his visions, like his symbols, was his own.

The eighteenth-century antiquarians like Bryant, David and Stuckeley had identified the original world culture with Druidism. Druids were the ritualists and totemists. Blake denounced the Druids : "Adam was a Druid, and Noah; also Abraham was called to succeed the Druidical age, which began to turn allegoric and mental signification into corporeal command, whereby human sacrifice would have depopulated the earth."[37] These Druids were succeeded by the Jews, Abraham, Moses, and Solomon, in continuation of the same culture. Moses established priestcraft, while Solomon built an earthly temple, in an attempt to turn the religion of liberty into the religion of Statehood. Thereafter, according to Blake, Biblical history brings forth in succession a number of

prophets who are selfish and hankered for political power under the pretended allegory of the divine vision: "The laws of the Jews were (both ceremonial and real) the basest and most oppressive of human codes, & being like all other codes given under pretence of divine command were what Christ pronounced them, The Abomination that maketh desolate, i.e., State Religion, which is the source of all cruelty."[38]

These lost souls, the so-called prophets, misled, according to Blake, the whole Christian nation into the corporeal bondage of self-destructive laws. Instead of believing in a God within, these Jews went on propounding the theory of a God who existed in heaven, and who demanded human-sacrifice for his selfish pleasure: "Thus men forgot that All deities reside in the human braast."[39] When we come to the Greeks, we find them laying the foundation of natural sciences and rational outlook. The corporeal enlightenment becomes the measurement of human sensibility, and man is thought to be a being who can be taught virtue and be asked to castigate vice, which "belong to Plato and Seneca and Nero."[40] The mythology of the Greeks, like their thought, was limited to a study of natural sciences: "The Greek and Roman Classics is the Antichrist."[41] Blake's castigation of the entire Judeo-Christian and Greek tradition is wholesale. The typological mechanism of these traditions leads to a cyclic vision where the infernal trinity of Bacon, Newton and Locke, is part of the eternal continuum. These typologies do not exhaust themselves into an eternal presence (Heidegger) and Blake's apocalyptic vision (which is to see man in God and God in man) of Man as Imagination. This is where Blake blends himself with the tradition of the Gita. I end with Frye's remarks already quoted: "...Blake was the first of European Idealists able to link his own tradition of thought with the *Bhagavadgita*."[42]

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1. Of the earliest native commentators it should suffice to mention the names of Adi Shankaracharya and Ramanujacharya. In our own time Bal Gangadhar Tilak and S. Radhakrishnan have contributed significantly towards our understanding of the Gita, especially as a way of life. All these studies

emphasized one or the other of the four yogas preached in the Gita: Bhakti, Karma, Dhyana and Raj.

2. The letter is prefaced in Charles Wilkins's translation of the Gita, *The Bhagvat-Gita, or Dialogues of Kreeshna and Arjoon* (London, 1785), p. 13.

3. *Ibid* , p. 10.

4. For a fuller account see my article "Holmell, Dow and Halhed: A Note on their Contribution to Indology in the Eighteenth-century," in *Journal of the Oriental Institute*, M. S.. University, Baroda, Vol. XXXIII, Nos 3-4, March-June 1984, op. 291-297; the article also appeared in *Glory of India: A Quarterly on Indology*, Vol. VI, Nos 1-4 (1982), pp 13-18.

5. M Parraud, *Le Bhaguat-Geeta* (Paris, 1787).

6 Halhed later obtained Sirr-e Akbar and made an English translation. See B. M Add. MS. 5516. This translation he evidently intended for publication See B M. Add. MS. 5658.

7. "Typological Interpretation of the Old Testament," in Claus Westermann, ed , & John Bright, trans, *Essays in Old Testament Hermeneutics* (Richmond, Va, 1963), pp. 17-39, quoted in Earl Miner, ed , *Literary Uses of Typology: From the Late Middle Ages to the Present* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), p. 4.

8. See Book IV of Oriegen's *Peri Archon* (*De Principis*), trans. by F. W. Butterworth as *Oriegen on the Firit Principles* (N. York 1966).

9. For *Rg. Vedic* poetics, see T. G Manikar, *The Rig Vedic Foundation of Classical Poetics*, distributed by Motilal Banarasidas.

10. Indriyani parany ahur, indriyebhyah param manah,
manasas tu para buddhir, yo buddheh paratastu sah. The transcription and translation followed is of R. C. Zaehner, *The Bhagavad-Gita* (London: Oxford University Press. 1969).

11. See his article, "Typology and Secular Literature: Some Medieval Problems and Examples," in Earl Miner, ed., *Literary Uses of Typology*, p. 23.

12. Geoffrey Keynes, ed , *Blake: Complete Writings* (London: OUP, 1972), p. 583

13. Northrop Frye, *Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947), p. 173.

14. *Ibid.*, p. 426.

15. *Ibid*

16. Michael Davis, *William Blake: A New Kind of Man* (London: Paul Elek, 1977), p 126.

17. *M. H. H.*, In G Keynes, ed , *Blake: Complete Writings*, p. 152.

18. M. Rudd, *Organised Innocence* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1956).

19. See Blake's letter to Thomas Butts, dated 25th April, 1803, in G. Keynes, ed., *op. cit.*, p. 823.

20. Keynes, p. 565.

21. *Ibid.*, p. 578.

22. *Ibid.*, p. 577.

23. *A Descriptive Catalogue*, in Keynes, p. 578.

24. S. Foster Damon, *William Blake: His Philosophy and Symbols* (London. 1969), p. 145.

25. W. J. Wilkins, *Hindu Mythology* (N. Delhi: Rupa & Co., 1978), pp. 343-344. See also N. Frye, *Fearful Symmetry*, p. 287. Cf. *Bhagavad-Gita*, ed., R. C. Zaehner, p. 306.

26. For Primal Man archetype, especially in Blake and Whitman, see my article, "The Hindu Contexts for William Blake's *The Four Zoas* and Walt Whitman' *Song of Myself*: A Study in Primal Man Archetype," in *Journal of Literature and Aesthetics*, Vol. 1, No. 4 (September 1982).

27. Blake begins his *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell* with: "Rintrah roars and Shakes his fires in the burder'd air,/Hungry clouds swag on the deep." Blakes' association of Rintrah with clouds and he as just man casting oway doubts is reminiscent of Indra whom Blake may have come across in any of Jones's accounts—especially his essay on the gods.

28. Charles Wilkins, *Bhagvat-Geeta*: *Dialogue of Kreeshna and Arjoon* (London, 1785), p. 131.

29. Frye, for example, applies most of the typological functions he discovered in Blake in his *Fearful Symmetry*, to his study of the Bible in *The Great Code*: *Bible and Literature*.

30. Paul J. Korshin, *Typologies in England 1650,1820* (Princeton: Princeton University Prees, 1982), p 134.

31. "To Thomas Butts, 22 Nov. 1920," Keynes, p. 818. While this again takes to the Gita (3.42), the fourfold also corresponds to the four states mentioned in *Mandukyopanishad*: the self (outward moving consciousness); the dreaming life (inner moving consciousness); the sleeping life (silent consciousness) and the Atman in its own pure state. See. p. 83 in Joan Mascaro, *The Upahnishads* (Penguin, 1977).

32. See S. Foster Damon, *William Blake*: *His Philosophy and Symbols*, p. 165.

33. *Ibid*:, p. 364.

34. Charles Wilkins, *Bhagvat-Geeta*, IX, p. 79.

35. "A Vision of the Last Judgment," Keynes, p. 613.

36. Middleton Murry, *William Blake*, pp. 270-71.

37. "A Descriptive Catalogue," No. V, Keynes, p. 578.

38. "Annotations to Watson," p. 25, in Keynes, p. 393.

39. *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, Plate 11; in Keynes, p. 153.

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42. See quotation No. 13.

T. R. Sharma

THE GITA AND THE THEME OF CONVERSION IN CARLYLE'S *SARTOR RESARTUS*

That Carlyle had read the Gita is borne out by many internal and external evidences and particularly by *Carlyle-Emerson Correspondence*. After its first translation into English by Charles Wilkins published on May 30, 1785 with an Introduction by Warren Hastings, the first governor-general of Bengal, the book became quite popular among the English people. This translation was not a private adventure but inspired and sponsored by no less a man than the governor-general of Bengal who was convinced of the fact that the Gita and the Indian Scriptures "will survive when the British Dominion in India shall have long ceased to exist."[1]

Probably Carlyle's first acquaintance with the Gita and its philosophy would not have been through Wilkins's translation but through German translations of the Gita. It cannot be gainsaid that Carlyle was a great scholar of German language, literature and history, greater than Coleridge, and that he introduced the German authors and German philosophy to English people by writing books and articles on Schiller, Goethe, Richter, Frederick the Great and by profusely quoting from and referring to Fitche, Herder, Schlegel, etc. Though politically England had been close to India, yet intellectually and spiritually Germans were the first to draw on Indian thought and translated the important ancient Indian works into German and other languages. V. Raghvan aptly writes : "Outside India, one can say without exaggeration that it (Germany) has been a second home of Sanskrit."[2] F. Von Myer first translated the Gita into Germany from Wilkins's book in 1801. It cannot be said with any sense of authenticity that Carlyle read Myer's translation of the Gita. But the extent he leaned upon

J. G. Herder, the Great German philosopher and theorist in the field of history and who influenced Carlyle's literary mentor and ideal Goethe, irrefutably sets out the fact that Carlyle read Herder's "Thoughts of Some Brahmins" published in 1792 (three years before Carlyle's birth) and which contains German translation of a few representative stanzas of the Bhagavadgita. Carlyle was also familiar with Wilhelm Von Humboldt's lengthy review of Von Schlegel's Latin translation of the Bhagavadgita. Wilhelm Von Humboldt after becoming Prussian Minister of Education in 1821 studied Sanskrit, read the Gita and said about this book in 1827, "perhaps the deepest and loftiest thing the world had to show." He delivered the famous lecture on the Bhagavadgita before the Academy of Sciences at Berlin in 1825. This Humboldt was a close friend of Goethe. Geothe five days before his death on March 17, 1832 wrote to Humboldt a penetrative letter regarding the second part of *Faust* which he completed that very day. It was Humboldt who took the papers of Faust Part Two from a sealed packet and got the work published. It can therefore be said with conviction that Humboldt's lecture on the Gita and his review influenced Goethe. Carlyle during all these years was in constant and intimate touch with Goethe, exchanging letters and books with him. It was in 1823-24 that he wrote the *Life of John Schiller*, one of Goethe's great friends. Thus Carlyle's acquaintance with the Bhagavadgita was more through Goethe and German translations which appeared in large number after 1801—the formative period of Carlyle's literary life.

The influence of the Gita on Carlyle is quite deep. His view of the world as a mere maya, his reiterated emphasis on the annihilation of ego, his vociferous advocacy for the emergence of a great man to lead mankind, his pleading for reducing the worldly desires to the minimum and his exclusive preoccupation with the idea of doing the duty unregardful of any return or reward can convince any reader of Carlyle that in all his writings the teachings of the Gita loom large. In all his works, whether they are biographical pieces, like *Life of Schiller*, *Life of Sterling*, *Essay on Goethe*, or prose fiction, like *Sartor Resarturs* or history books like *French Revolution*, *Cromwell*, *Frederick the Great*, or political treatises, like *Chartism*, *Past and Present*, *Latter-day Pamphlets*, his entire philosophy hinges on the above mentioned ideas. Not that these ideas are not to be found in other sacred books of various reli ions, but in no other book perhaps these ideas have been summed up so

pointedly and briefly as in the Gita. In volume it is the smallest book among all the sacred books in the world.

Sartar Resartus, the *magnum opus* of Carlyle contains all these ideas. The hero in *Sartor Resartus* is Teufelsdrockh who Carlyle points out is familiar with "Oriental Shasters". Referring to Teufelsdrockh, Carlyle writes :

> Here, however, may be the place to state that, in much of our Philosopher's history, there is something of an almost Hindoo character.[3]

Instead of tracing all the important aspects of the philosophy of the Gita in Carlyle's *Sartor Resartus*, I shall confine this paper to deal with the conversion of Teufelsdrockh which so significantly recalls to mind Arjuna's conversion. The fact is that one of the main themes of the Gita is the conversion of Arjuna and Carlyle in *Sartor Resartus* Book II, Chapter VI, VII, VIII and IX respectively entitled "Sorrows of Teufelsdrockh" "The Everlasting No" "Centre of Indifference" and the "Everlasting Yea" in an identical manner sets forth the stages of Teufelsdrockh's transformation from despair to total dedication to his duty. Moreover, as Krishna teaches Arjuna the importance of duty to remove his despondency, Teufelsdrockh also gets rid of his sorrows after debating at length to himself and coming to the conclusion that a man should do his duty only, the rest is beyond his control. An analysis of the above mentioned chapters of *Sartor Resartus* will set out the fact that the teachings of the Gita sank deep into Carlyle's mind at the time of writing this work. The Gita is a *Divine Commedia* in which soul's pilgrimage has been shown. Carlyle follows the same plan in describing the incidents in the progress of a soul in its journey from Everlasting No to Everlasting Yea. Interestingly enough, Carlyle uses the same symbols and the process. He calls his book *Sartor Resartus* or *Clothes Philosophy*. The symbol of the cloth has been used in the Gita also. In the Gita, Chapter II Sloka 22, Lord Krishna says to Arjuna :

वासांसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय नवानि ग्रह्णाति नरोऽपराणि,
तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्णान्यिन्यानि संयाति नवानि देही

(Just as a person casts off worn-out garments and puts on others, that are new, even so does the embodied soul cast off worn-out bodies and take on others that are new).[4]

What Lord Krishna means to say is that the Eternal soul is

covered by this body in the same way as body is covered with clothes, and just as a man, casting off old clothes puts on others and new ones, so the Atman, casting off old bodies, becomes united with others and new bodies. In Book I, Chapter X, Carlyle uses the symbol of clothes and this becomes the central idea of his whole book. Carlyle writes :

> 'To the eye of vulgar logic', says he, 'what is man' ? An Omnivorous Biped that wears Breeches. To the eye of Pure Reason what is he ? A soul, a spirit, and divine Apparition. Round his mysterious Me, there lies, under all those wool-rags, a Garment of flesh (or of Sens s), contextured in the Loom of Heaven....Deep hidden is he under that strange Garment; amid sounds and colours and forms as it were swathed-in, and inextricably over-shrouded : yet it is sky-woven, and worthy of a God. Stands he not thereby in the centre of Immensities, in the conflux of Eternities.[5]

The immortality and immensity of soul is the crux of Carlyle's philosophy in *Sartor Resartus*, as it is in the Gita. Carlyle shows that man's divinity lies under the garment of flesh and blood covering up the divine soul. He believes that in everything about man, there are two meanings : one suggesting the temporary and perishable things in life, the other related to his spiritual side. What the eye of the flesh usually sees is only a garment, an outer appearance, but the higher and heavenly essence is hidden beneath.

Carlyle then shows his hero, Teufelsdrockh, passing through a spiritual crisis, reminiscent of Arjuna's spiritual agony. A process of fermentation goes in his heart. It is a painful process and it culminates in fits of distraction. He is shut out from Hope and is unable to discern anything.

A spirit of universal scepticism has taken possession of his heart. Teufelsdrockh again says :

> ...the ground burnt under me; there was no rest for the sole of my foot. I was alone, alone ! Ever too the strong inward longing shaped Fantasms for itself : towards these, one after the other, must I fruitlessly wander.[6]

He finds meaninglessness and purposelessness in life and in the entire scheme of this universe :

> To me the universe was all void of Life, of Purpose, of Volition, even of Hostility : it was one huge, dead, immeasurable steam-engine rolling on, in its dead indifference to grind me limb from limb.[7]

This despondency of Teufelsdrockh is because of his sense of possessiveness. Arjuna's main cause of anguish is also possessiveness, although the circumstances in the case of the two are different. Arjuna's expression of his distress in the following words shows that Carlyle had the Gita in his mind, when he made Teufelsdrockh voice his despondency. Arjuna says that when he sees his own people arrayed and eager for fight, his limbs quail, his mouth goes dry, his body shakes and his hair stands on end. The Gandiva slips from his hand and his skin too is burning all over. He is not able to stand steady. His mind is reeling :

> दृष्टवेमं स्वजनं कृष्ण युयुत्सुं समुपस्थितम्
> सीदन्ति मम गात्राणि मुखं च परिशुष्यति
> वेपथुश्च् शरीरे मे रोमहर्षश्च् जायते
> गाण्डीवं स्त्रंसते हस्तात्त्वक्चैव परिदह्यते
> न च शक्नोम्यवस्थातुं भ्रमतीव च मे मनः[8]

Arjuna's hesitation and despondency is not because of any fear of war but the thought of killing his own people causes distress and anxiety to him. His words, as the words of Teufelsdrockh make us think of the loneliness of man oppressed by doubt, dread of waste and emptiness, from whose being the richess of heaven and earth and the comfort of human affection are slipping away. This sort of intolerable despondency is quite often the experience of all those who aspire for the vision of Reality. Arjuna and Carlyle's hero Teufelsdrockh speak in agony. They have their minds on the frontiers of two worlds. They are struggling to do something as men but they are incapable of decision because of their inability to understand themselves, their fellow-beings and the real nature of the universe in which they are placed. Both of them are equally incapable of identifying their duties. As a matter of fact, their distress is a dramatization of a perpetually recurring predicament. Hamlet felt, Wordsworth felt, Byron in sorrows of George felt, Goethe in sorrows of Werther felt, Shelley and so many others felt. Man, on the threshold of higher life, feels disgusted with the glamour of the world but illusions cling to him

and he cherishes them. Oblivious of his divine heritage he feels attached to his personality and is agitated by the conflicting forces of the world. Before he becomes conscious of the world of spirit and accepts the challenges posed by it, he has to get rid of selfishness and egoism. Both in Arjuna and Teufelsdrockh we find restoration of men to spiritual nature. In both the cases the evolution of the human soul is portrayed. The fact is that this fight takes place every moment in the soul of man. Both Arjuna and Teufelsdrockh get behind their socialized self and betray awareness of themselves as individuals, alone and isolated.

Surprisingly, the process through which Arjuna is converted and enlightened to understand the Reality by Lord Krishna is also the process through which Teufelsdrockh finds light dawning upon him. Carlyle shows that the conversion of Teufelsdrockh from Everlasting No to Everlasting Yea is through his realizations that :

(1) This body is a battlefield on which the spiritual battle is to be fought.

(2) Happiness and unhappiness are mere false notions : There is something higher in man than love for Happiness.

(3) Ego is to be annihilated.

(4) God is all pervasive and the world is His creation.

(5) Reduce worldly desires to the minimum.

(6) Do duty in the well-being of others unregardful of reward.

These realizations of Teufelsdrockh are set forth by Carlyle in the chapter entitled 'Everlasting Yea', which reads like Krishna's teachings to Arjuna. The Gita opens with a question of Dhratrastra :

धर्म क्षेत्रे कुरुक्षेत्रे, समवेता युयुत्सव:
मामका: पाण्डवाश्चैव किमकुर्वत संजय[9]

In a sense धर्मक्षेत्रे (dharmksetra) is this world which is the battle ground for a moral struggle. At the same time the heart of man, too, is a battlefield in which perpetual war-fare goes on between the spirit of good and that of evil. Creative process is one of perpetual tension between two incompatibilities. This conflict is necessary for the development and cosmic advancement. Carlyle, referring to this sort of conflict, writes :

...thus have we a warfare; in the beginning, especially, a

> hard-fought battle ..And as the clay-given mandate, Eat thou and be filled, at the same time persuasively proclaims itself through every nerve—must not there be a confusion, a contest, before the better Influence can become the upper ?[10]

Gita shows two warfares—on the external and ostensible between Kaurvas and Pandavas and the other invisible and internal within Arjuna. Carlyle though refers to both the struggles yet lays bare the internal "righteous dissatisfaction" of his hero and his conversion from the tyranny of self to the higher purposes of the "eternal process" as it happens in the case of Arjuna.

For Carlyle the four cardinal principles are annihilation of ego, possessing the 'seeing eye', suppressing the desires and 'work is worship'. It is through the understanding of these principles that Teufelsdrockh could get better of his despair and emerge into a new world of hopefulness and involvement. Carlyle's 'annihilation of ego' suggests the total surrender to God and suppression of the worldly desires and it results in seeing the reality. Carlyle writes in relation to Teufelsdrockh.

> 'Here, then, as I lay in that Centre of Indifference (द्विधा); cast doubtless by benignant upper Influence, is a healing sleep, the heavy dreams rolled gradually away and I awoke to a new Heaven and a new Earth. The first preliminary moral Act Annihilation of Self had been happily accomplished; and my mind's eyes were now unsealed, and its hands ungyved.'[11]

Annihilation of ego leads to demolish the artificial barriers of the world and one is able to see into the Reality, piercing through the veil. Teufelsdrockh is no more haunted by fear and vain hopes. He is restored to faith and feels the presence of God everywhere. He has the first glimpse of Truth and it resolves all his doubts. He says :

> ...what is Nature ? Ha ! Why do I not name thee God ? Art not thou the "Living Garment of God" ? O Heavens, is it, in very deed, HE, then, that ever speaks through thee; that lives and loves in thee, that lives and loves in me.[12]

Now Teufelsdrockh instead, of isolation and loneliness, feels great love and pity for his fellow-men,—all united in a common bond. The difficulties which have kept him from the truth are

removed. He realizes that man's true nature lies in his soul which is imperishable. Teufelsdrockh says :

> The Universe is not dead and demoniacal, a charnel-house with spectres; but godlike, and my Father's.[13]

The next stage of his conversion is the realization of futility of worldly desires. He has now no doubt about the fact that unhappiness in life is the result of non-fulfilment of one's desires and expectations. Man makes an arbitrary standard of life in this world to which he considers himself entitled. Anything greater or lesser than this is called Happiness or Unhappiness. He learns the gospel of Renunciation of worldly desires as on it depends man's true happiness. With the help of a mathematical example he enjoins on man the necessity of minimizing his desires :

> So true is it, what I then said, that *the Fraction of Life can be increased in value not so much by increasing your Numerator as by lessening your Denominator*. Nay, unless my Algebra deceives me, *Unity* itself divided by *Zero* will give *Infinity*. Make thy claim of wages a zero, then; thou hast the world under thy feet.[14]

He questions the very right of a man to be happy. Those who aspire for wordly pleasures are contemptuously condemned by him as vultures :

> Art thou nothing other than a Vulture, then, that fliest through the Universe seeking after somewhat to *eat*; and shrieking dolefully because carrion enough is not given thee ?[15]

This reveals him the path of duty which alone can help man lead a happy life. All contentions in the world emamate from the false theory of life—that Happiness is the end of life. The ideal of duty performed in life will abolish that false standard. Carlyle's attitude towards religion and the gospel of finding our happiness in a higher blessedness which implies the promotion of the happiness of others and his gospel of Renunciation are inextricably linked with his gospel of duty. Teufelsdrockh at last exhorts:

> Love not Pleasure; love God. This is the Everlasting Yea, wherein all contradiction is solved : wherein whoso walks and works, it is well with him.[16]

His "Worship of Sorrow" enjoins the gospel of Duty, not of

Right. Carlyle waxes his eloquence on the Duties of man which is so analogous to the teachings of the Gita. Teufelsdrockh's conversion is complete when he says, "'Do the Duty which lies nearest thee, which thou knowest to be a Duty ! Thy second Duty will already have become clearer !"[17] This is exactly what Lord Krishna asks Arjuna to do and which helps the conversion of Arjuna :

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन
मा कर्म फलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते सङ्गोऽस्त्व कर्मणि

(To action alone hast thou right and never at all to its fruits; let not the fruits of action be thy motive; neither let there be in thee any attachment to inaction).[18]

Carlyle's religious conviction leads to the duty of self-abnegation or self renunciation. Through Teufelsdrockh's realizations, Carlyle lays down that a man has got to get rid of insincerity around him and for this he has to do nothing but do his duty. Teufelsdrockh feels convinced that work is Reality striving against unreality. He realized that without work man is no longer a world but a chaos. Teufelsdrockh therefore admonishes all :

> Produce ! Produce ! Were it but the pitifullest infinitesimal fraction of a Product, produce it, in God's name ! 'Tis the utmost thou hast in thee : Out with it, then. Up ! up ! Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy whole might".[19]

Lord Krishna too teaches that without action there is chaos and he asks Arjuna to work without any consideration :

नियतं कुरु कर्म त्वं कर्म ज्यायो ह्यकर्मण:
शरीरयात्रापि च ते न प्रसिद्धयेदकर्मण:
यज्ञार्थात्कर्मणोऽन्यत्र लोकोऽयं कर्मबन्धन:
तदर्थं कर्म कौन्तेय मुक्तसङ्ग: समाचर

(Do thou thy allotted work, for action is better that inaction : even the maintenance of thy physical life cannot be effected without action. Save work done as and for a sacrifice this world is in bondage to work. Therefore, O son of Kunti (Arjuna) do thy work as a sacrifice, becoming free from all attachments.)[20]

In both the cases, i.e. Arjuna and Teufelsdrockh, the teaching given is to do work without any desire and for the sake of the Divine. One of the most glorious passages in *Sartor Resartus* is

that in which Carlyle shows Teufelsdrockh realizing the highest aim of life which Lord Krishna preaches to Arjuna in Chapter X of the Gita. Krishna tells Arjuna that God is the material and efficient cause of the world. The aspirant is not deluded by the passing forms but knowing that the Supreme is the source of all the forms, he worships the Supreme. Krishna refers to those whose thoughts are fixed in God, whose lives are wholly given up to God, and enlightening each other and ever conversing of God, they are contented and they rejoice God. To such persons who are constantly devoted and who worship God with love, the concentration of understanding is granted by God to attain Him. Since they constantly remain within God's true state, God destroys the darkness born of ignorance by the shining lamp of wisdom. In Book III Chapter IV entitled 'Helotage' in *Sartor Resartus* Carlyle shows Teufelsdrockh having an identical realization. Teufelsdrockh says :

> Two men I honour, and no third. First the toilworn Craftsman that with earth-made Implement laboriously conquers the Earth, and makes her man's. Venerable to me is the hard hand....A second man I honour, and still more highly : Him who is seen toiling for the spiritually indispensable, not daily bread, but the bread of Life. Is not he too in his duty; endeavouring towards inward Harmony; revealing this, by act or by word, through all his outward endeavours, be they high or low ? Highest of all, when his outward and his inward endeavour are one: when we can name him Artist; not earthly Craftsman only, but inspired Thinker, who with heaven made Implement conquers Heaven for us ! If the poor and humble toil that we have Food must not the high and glorious toil for him in return, that he have Light, have Guidance, Freedom, Immortality ?—These two, in all their degrees I honour : all else is chaff and dust, which let the wind blow whither it listeth.[21]

The first preaches *Karmyog* and the latter is *Gyan* and *Bhakt Yogi.* This realization of Teufelsdrockh sets forth his complete transformation. Despair and despondency have given way to action and faith. It is as complete a conversion as that of Arjuna after the teachings of Lord Krishna and the process in

both the cases is interestingly the same. Carlyle's annihilation of ego and consequent on it total surrender to God is Gita's *Bhakti-yog*, his 'seeing eye', enabling man to understand the Reality hidden behind the external appearance as *Maya* resulting in the removal of all dualties is *Gyanyog* and his proverbial exhortation *Work is Worship* which excluded all sense of return or reward for work because it is worship, is Gita's *Karmayog*. Thus Carlyle in *Sartor Resartus* which till today is the least understood book written in English clearly sets out the influence of the Gita in the pattern of conversion in the case of his hero Teufelsdrockh.

About this conversion of Teufelsdrockh Carlyle makes a very significant remark in Book II Chapter X of *Sartor Resartus* entitled 'Pause'. He writes :

> Thus have we, as closely and perhaps satisfactorily as, in such circumstances, might be, followed Teufelsdrockh through the various successive states and stages of Growth, Entanglement, Unbelief, and almost Reprobation, into a certain clearer state of what he himself seems to consider as Conversion. 'Blame not the word', says he;'rejoice rather that such a word, signifying such a thing, has come to light in our modern Era, though hidden from the wisest Ancients. The Old World knew nothing of Conversion;... It was a new-attained progress in the Moral Development of man : hereby has the Highest come home to the bosoms of the most Limited; what to Plato was but a hallucination, and to Socrates a chimera, is now clear and certain...to your Zinzendorfs, your Wesleys, and the poorest of their Pietists and Methodists'.
>
> It is here, then, that the spiritual majority of Teufelsdrockh commences : we are henceforth to see him 'work in welldoing', with the spirit and clear aims of a Man.[22]

Does it not remind us of Arjuna ?

REFERENCES

1. Referring to the remarks of Warren Hastings about the Gita R.K. Dasgupta writes : "This was said in 1785 and said by a soldier and a colonial

statesman with little reputatian for learning and taste. But it is nevertheless, a very significant expression of western response to Indian literature First, the estimate is made from a translation. Secondly, it exalts the work as great but takes care to insulate it from western literary standards Thirdly, it is concerned with the wisdom of the work than with its literary workmanship. The whole approach is primarily philosophical and in the case of a work like *Bhagavadgita* it could not be otherwise "

('Western Response to Indian Literature' in *Indian Literature*, X,(1967), 5.

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4. *The Bhagavadgita*, Ed. S. Radhakrishnan, (Reprinted Jan. 1977, Blackie & Sons (India) Ltd.) p. 108.

5. *Sartor Resartus*, p. 107.
6. *Ibid* , p. 198.
7. *Ibid*., p. 207.
8. *The Bhagavadgita*, p. 98.
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11. *Ibid* , p. 227.
12. *Ibid* , p. 229.
13. *Idem.*
14. *Ibid*., p. 232.
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17. *Ibid* , p. 236.
18. *The Bhagavadgita*, p. 119.
19. *Sartor Resartus*, pp. 237-38.
20. *The Bhagavadgita*, p. 135.
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22. *Sartor Resartus*, pp. 238-39.

Brahma Dutt Sharma

THE ECHOES OF THE BHAGAVADGITA IN R.W. EMERSON

Much in Ralph Waldo Emerson's works is so different from what the Western Christian doctrines hold that a large number of Emerson's readers consider it not only worthwhile but also rewarding to put in efforts on tracing the sources of his views and to study which views have undergone what changes in his crucible. There are writers who hold that Emerson owes everything by and large to American and European writers. For instance, in his book *Emerson and Thoreau : Transcendentalists in Conflict* (1966) Joel Porte makes an attempt to prove that the chief source of Emerson's view is Locke's 'Essay on Human Understanding'. Likewise, in his book *Literary History of the United States*, Spiller expresses the view that Emerson, even though he was influenced by Goethe, Coleridge, Neoplatonism, German idealism and Oriental mysticism, never departed from the Christian tradition. Floyd Stovall agrees with Spiller and describes his opinion as "now widely held".[1]

However, there are writers who have come to the conclusion that Emerson owes much to the scriptures of the Hindus. For instance, in his critical biography of Emerson of 1881 entitled *Ralph Waldo Emerson : His Life Writings, and Philosophy* G. W. Cooke includes Oriental scriptures as one of the four sources of Emerson's thought, the other three being New England Puritanism, Neoplatonism, and European Romanticism; in his article "Emerson the Oriental" (*University of California Chronicle*, (1928), George Williamson says that Emerson is more Oriental than Platonic; and in his book *Emerson and Asia* (1930) F.I. Carpenter argues that by 1845 Emerson had become "an Orientalist in earnest".[2]

There are ample proofs to the effect that Emerson read the translations of a number of Hindu scriptures in the library of

Harvard University, and the Bhagavadgita was one of his favourite books. For instance, in his article "More Notes on Orientalism in Emerson's Harvard"[3] Kenneth W. Cameron has given a list of books which were there in the Harvard library during Emerson's time. De Gerando's translation of *Mahabharat* appears in Emerson's annual reading-list in 1830.[4] Since the Bhagavadgita is a part of *Mahabharat*, Emerson must have read it while reading *Mahabharat*. By 24th of May 1831 Emerson had also read Ousin's *Course de Philosophie* in which the philosophy embodied in the Bhagavadgita has been discussed. He also read Charles Wilkins's translation of the Bhagavadgita as he describes the book as one of his favourite ones in his letter of August 4, 1873. In his letter dated September 1, 1845 written to James Elliot Cabot, Emerson writes : "As little can I part with Bhagvat Geeta, I have tried once or twice to send it home, but each time decided to strain a little of your courteous professors that you could supply your occasional use of the book from the library". The fact that he had a high regard for this book in his heart is evident from an entry dated October 1, 1848 in his *Journal* (vii, 5ii), namely, "I owed a magnificent day to the Bhagvat Geeta. It was the first of books, it was as if an empire spoke to us, nothing small or unworthy, but large, serene consistent, the voice of an old intelligence which is another age and climate had pondered and thus disposed of the same questions which exercise us".

In several of his essays Emerson rejects various Christian concepts. For instance, in his essay "Self-Reliance" he rejects the Christian concept of the Original Sin and the view that man is a sinner. In the words of Edward Wagenknecht, he regards the belief in the Original Sin as "the soul's mumps, and measles and whooping coughs."[5] He boldly says in the essay "Self-Reliance" : "...if I am the Devil's child, will live then, from the Devil" (*WRWE*, I, p. 34)[6]. In his essay "Heroism" he describes sinfulness as something justifiable when he says : "Unhappily no man exists who has not in his own person become, to some amount a stockholder in the sin, and so made himself liable to a share in the expiation" (*WRWE*, I, p. 160).

Likewise he finds no need of an institution for a man to reach God through. In his essay "Spiritual Laws" he asserts : "O my brothers, God exists, There is a soul at the centre of nature, and over the will of every man, so that none of us can wrong the

universe. It has so infused its strong enchantment into nature, that we prosper when we accept its advice; and when he struggle to wound its creatures, our hands are glued to our sides, or they beat our own breasts...We need only obey. There is guidance for each of us, and by lowly listening we shall hear the right word" (*WRWE* I, pp. 90–91). Here his approach is different from the orthodox Christian one because a Christian is expected to accept church as a link between him and God. Emerson does it also in his essay "The Over-soul" when he advances the view that "all spiritual being is in man"—and asserts that "there is no bar or wall in the soul where man, the effect, ceases, and God, the cause, begins (*WRWE* I, p. 174). Here he establishes a cause and effect relationship between God and man.

In his poem "Rhodora" (1839) Emerson rejects the Christian approach towards Nature. In the Bible Adam is expected to treat the objects of Nature, barring the tree of knowledge, as something made for him to consume. The implication is that Nature is something inferior to man and has been created to gratify his needs. In this poem Emerson describes a Rhodora in the forest "spreading its leafless blooms in a damp nook/To please the desert and the sluggish brook" (*WRWE*, IV, p. 111). He tells the plant :

> Rhodora ! if the sages ask thee why
> This charm is wasted on the earth and sky,
> Tell them dear, that if eyes were made for seeing
> Then beauty is its own excuse for being
>
> (*WRWE*, IV, p. 111).

Emerson gives to Nature a status equal to that of man when he says, "The self-same power that brought me there brought you" (WRWE, IV, p. 111).

Emerson believes that one can realize God if one is a "meek lover of the good". The fact comes to light when we read the last two lines of his poem "Brahma" (1857) namely, "But thou meek lover of the good !/Find me, and turn thy back on heaven" (*WRWE*, IV, p. 253). Here too Emerson gives Church no role in one's attaining salvation. It is in the light of such facts that in his book *American Literature and Christian Doctrine* Randall Stewart goes to the extent of calling Emerson "radically anti-Christian".[7]

Several of the metaphysical and moral views embodied in the Gita find embodiment in the works of R.W. Emerson. They inclu-

de the view that the supreme being permeates the world, the doctrine of the transmigration of soul, the doctrine of *karma*, the concept of the equality of all living beings, the views that one should devote oneself to one's duty without caring for the reward and that one should remain undisturbed when in trouble. These views find expression in his essays like 'History', 'Self-Reliance', 'Compensation', 'Spiritual Laws', 'Heroism', 'The Over-Soul', 'Intellect' and 'Nature', and his poems like 'Brahma', The Rhodora', and 'Not Gold But Only Men'.

One of the views which find expression in both the Gita and Emerson is that the Supreme Being permeates the universe. When Lord Krishna shows Arjuna His Cosmic form (*Vivat rupa*), He describes Himself as a king among men, a *pipal* tree among the trees, Indra among the gods, Uchchaishrava among the horses, Eravata among the elephants and the like (The Gita, X, 21-40), the implication is that the best constituent of an entity is the Supreme Being himself. This is the assertion of R.W. Emerson's Brahma too and He describes Himself as the wings of a bird and the hymn that the Brahmin sings, when he says :

> They reckon ill who leave me out,
> When me they fly, I am the wings;
> ... ...
> And I the hymn the Brahmin sings.
>
> (*WRWE*, IV, p. 253)

Emerson uses the word Brahma here in the sense of the Supreme Being referred to in the *Brahma Sutras* as Brahman. The word does not mean the creator god Brahma, one of the three aspects of Godhead, the other two being the preserver god Vishnu and the destroyer god Shiva, though F. I. Carpenter thinks so when he says, "*In Brahma* the 'I' is the impersonal creative energy of the universe".[8] Here Emerson's Brahma describes Himself as "the hymn the Brahmin sings" just as in the Gita Lord Krishna describes himself as the prayer song gayatri when he says :

> *brhatsama tatha samnam*
> *gayatri chhandasam aham*
> *masanam margasirsoham*
> *vitunam kusumakarah*
>
> (The Gita X, 35)

"Likewise, of hymns (I am) Brihatsaman, of metres (I am) gayatri;

of months (I am) margasirsa and of seasons (I am) the flower-bearer (spring").[9]

The realization of the Supreme Being is better than worldly pleasures according to Emerson and he makes the Supreme Being say in the poem "Brahma" :

The strong gods pine for my abode
And pine in vain the sacred Seven
But thou, meek lover of the good
Find me, and turn thy back on heaven

(*WRWE*, IV, p. 253).

In the Gita too Lord Krishna advises Arjun to worship the Supreme Power alone and not to think of getting the pleasures of heaven :

traividya mam somaph putapapa
yajnair istva svargatim prarthayante
te punyam asadya surendralokam
asnanti divyan divi devabhogan
te tem bhuktva svargalokam visalam
ksine punye martyalokam visanti
evam trayidharmam anuprapanna
gatagatam kamakama labhante
ananyas chintayanto mam
ye janah paryupasate
tesam nityabhiyuktanam
yogakshemam vahamy aham

(The Gita, IX, 20–22)

["The knowers of the three Vedas who drink the soma juice and are cleansed of sin worshipping Me with sacrifices, pray for the way to heaven. They reach the holy world of Indra (the lord of heaven) and enjoy in heaven the pleasures of the gods.

"Having enjoyed the spacious world of heaven, they enter (return to) the world of mortals, when their their merit is exhausted; thus conforming to the doctrine enjoyed in the three Vedas and desirous of enjoyments, they obtain the changeable (what is subject to birth and death).

"But those who worship Me, meditating on Me alone, to them who ever persevere, I bring attainment of what they have not and security in what they have"].

Lord Krishna says in the Gita that the self or the soul, which resides in the body, is immortal and that it neither slays nor is slain. He says so in the 19th shloka of the second chapter of the book, namely

Ya enam vetti hantaram yashchainam manyate hatam
ubhau tau na vijaneeto nayam hanti na hanyate

(The Gita, II, 19)

[Both he who regards this (soul) as a slayer, and he who regards this (soul) as slain are ignorant as this neither slays nor is slain.]

Lord Krishna also asserts that one who is born is sure to die and one who dies is sure to be born again. He says so in the 27th shloka of the second chapter of the Gita :

jatasya hi dhruvo mrityur
dhruvo janma mritasya cha
tasmadapariharyerthe natvam shochitumarhasi

(The Gita, II, 27)

[One who is born cannot escape death and one who dies cannot escape rebirth.]

Lord Krishna explains to Arjuna that at the time of what is described as death, the soul leaves a body and enters another. He says so in the 22nd shloka of the second chapter of the Gita :

Vasansi jirnani yatha vihaya navanigrihnati naroparani
tatha sharirani vihaya jirnani anyani sanyati navani dehi

(The Gita, II, 22)

[Just as a man discards his old clothes and puts on new ones, in the same way the soul goes on discarding old bodies and entering new ones.]

Lord Krishna says so also in the 23rd shloka of the second chapter :

nainam chhindanti shastrani, nainam dahati pavakah
nachainam klediyantiapo, nainam shoshayati marutah

(The Gita, II, 23)

[Weapons do not cut it, fire does not burn it, water does not drench it and air does not dry it.]

Both these ideas, namely, the soul's being immortal, and the soul's going from the no-longer usable body into a usable one at the time of death find embodiment in R.W. Emerson's following four lines from his poem "Brahma" (1857) :

If the red slayer think he slays
Or if the slain think he is slain
They know not well the subtle ways
I keep and pass and turn again

(*WRWE*, IV, p. 253)

No doubt, the poet does not use the word 'soul' or any of its synonyms after the transitive verb 'slays' and lets them remain without objects, it is evident that he is talking about the soul as the persona in the poem is Brahma or the Supreme Being. The first three lines of the poem "Brahma" in the stanza quoted above are the English version of one-and-a-half lines of the shloka with "ye enam vetti hantaram" quoted above.

In his book *The Orient in American Transcendentalism* (1932) A.E. Christie asserts that Emerson "did not subscribe to the doctrine of Transmigration".[10] But the fact remains that the doctrine not only projects itself in Emerson's poems but also gets straightforward support from Emerson's pen. In his essay 'History' "the transmigration of souls is no fable. I would it was;..." (*WRWE* I, p. 23) and posits his faith in the concept. He does it even more explicitly when he explains intuition in his essay "Swedenborg" in the words : "The soul having been often born, or as the Hindoos say, 'travelling the path of existence through thousands of births' having beheld the things which are here, those which are in heaven, and those which are beneath, there is nothing of which she has not gained the knowledge; no wonder that she is able to recollect in regard to any one thing, what formerly she knew". (*WRWE* II, p. 285).

It may be argued that Emerson's assertion (that the slayer who thinks he slays does not know the subtle ways) implies that a human being is not the real doer, that he is only an instrument in the hands of the Supreme Being and that the Supreme Being alone is the real doer, and thus Emerson is making human beings unaccountable for their actions because a tool is not accountable for what it is made to do as it has not been given a free will to choose what to do and what not to do. But this is not the meaning of the text. The emphasis in the first of the lines of the stanza quoted above is on the word 'slays' rather than on the word 'he'. In other words Emerson means to say that the man who thinks he has *slain* does not know the fact because it is only the body which has been

slain and the soul cannot be slain in any case at all. The expression 'red slayer' does not mean Shiva here though A.N. Dwivedi believes it to mean that and asserts : "Now, the 'red slayer' of Emerson's poem is Shiva the Destroyer. It is a literal translation of *Rudra*, one of the names by which Siva is known, *Rudra* is a Sanskrit word derived from *rudhira*, which means 'red'".[11] The fact is that Rudra or Shiva is regarded as the Destroyer of the universe, not as a slayer. The word 'slayer' in this context means nothing but 'a person who slays'; the word *rudhir* means 'blood' not red, by the way.

Lord Krishna teaches Arjuna to attribute to the Supreme Being all that he eats, sacrifices does and gives. He does so in the 27th shloka of the 9th chapter of the Gita :

yat karoshi, yadashnasi yajjuhoshi dadasi yat
yat tapasyasi, kaunteya, tatkurusva mad arpanam

(The Gita IX, 27)

["Whatever thou dost, whatever thou eatest, what ever thou offerest, whatever thou givest away, whatever austerities thou practise —do that, son of Kunti (Arjuna) as an offering to me"]

Emerson's Brahma too expects one to ignore even heaven for Him. He does it when He says : "Find me, and turn thy back on heaven *WRWE*, IV, p. 253).

The idea of the inevitability of death embodied in Lord Krishna's words *'jatasya hi dhruvo mrityu'* quoted above finds embodiment in his poem "Hamatreya" (1846) where he laughs at people's trying to own as much land as possible. The poet says :

Ah the hot owner sees not Death, who adds
Him to his land, a lump of mold the more.
Hear what the Earth says :

Earth Song

Mine and yours
Mine, not yours

(*WRWE*, IV, p. 108).

Lord Krishna enjoins upon Arjuna to devote himself to work when he says :

niyatam kuru karma tvam
karma jyayo by akarmanah
sarirayatra picha te
na prasidhyed akarmanah (The Gita, III, 8)

["Do thou thy alloted work, for action is better than inaction; even the maintenance of thy physical life cannot be effected without action"].

Thus the teacher here teaches his pupil not to shirk work at all. He advises him to work without even thinking of the reward :

karmanai va hi samsiddimasthita janakadayah
lokasamgraham eva pi sampasyan kartum arhasi

(The Gita, III, 20).

["It was even by works that Janaka and others attained to perfection, Thou shouldst do works also with a view to the maintenance of the world"]

Lord Krishna also teaches :

karmanyevadhikaraste ma phaleshu kadachana
ma karmaphal heturbhurma to sangostvakarmani

(The Gita, II, 47)

["To action alone hast thou a right and never at all to its fruits; let not the fruits of action be thy motive; neither let there be in thee any attachment to inaction"].

Emerson embodies this message of Karma in his poem "Not God But only Men". The poet here says that the people of a country can make a nation great by working hard day and night; they can make it strong by putting in labour and it is wrong to believe that the wealth a nation possesses makes a nation great. He advances this view also in his essay "Self-Reliance" when he says, "As soon as the man is at one with Cod, he will not beg. He will then see prayer in all action. The prayer of the farmer kneeling in his field to weed it, the prayer of the rower kneeling with the strokes of his oar, are true prayers heard through nature,..." (*WRWE*, I, p. 52). In this very essay he writers, "...do your work, and I shall know you. Do your work, and you shall reinforce yourself" (*W.R.W.E.*, I, p. 36).

In the following lines of his essay "Compensation" Emerson is elucidating the idea embodied in Lord Krishna's above-quoted words '*karmanyevadhikaraste, ma phaleshu kadachana*' (Action is thy duty, reward not they concern) which imply that a virtuous action will inevitably be followed by welcome results, and a vicious action will inevitably be followed by unwelcome ones; "...the law holds with equal sureness for all right action. Love, and you shall be loved. All love is mathematically just, as much as the

two sides of an algebraic equation. The good man has absolute good, which like fire turns everything to its own nature, so that you cannot do him any harm; but as the royal armies sent against Napoleon, when he approached, cast down their colors and from enemies frame friends, so disasters of all kinds as sickness, offence, poverty, prove benefactors." (WRWE, I, p. 77).

In the Gita Lord Krishna is all for resorting to fighting for a just cause. He regards not-fighting in such a case as a symptom of cowardice. He calls Arjuna a coward for having resolved not to fight the Kauravas on the ground that they are his kinsmen and says as a soldier is in search of a war in which he has an opportunity to fight for a just cause.

Kaibyam ma sma gamah partha
nai tat tvayy upapadyate
ksudaram hrdaya daurbalyam
tyaktvo'ttistha paramtapa (The Gita II, 3)

["Yield not to this unmanliness, O Partha (Arjuna), for it does not become thee, cast off this petty faintheartedness and arise, O Oppress or of the foes.]

and

svadharman api cha veksya
na vikampitum arhasi
dharmyad dhi yuddhach chreya myat
ksatriyasya na vidyate (The Gita, III, 31)

["Further having regard for thine own duty, thou shouldst not falter, there exists no greater good for a ksatriya than a battle enjoined by duty"].

Emerson too is all praise for his countrymen who fought and sacrificed their lives to win freedom for their country. In his poem "Concord Hymn" (1837) he admires these heroes of his country when he writes :

Spirit, that made those heroes dare
To die, and leave their children free,
Bid Time and Nature gently spare
The shaft we raise to them and thee

(*WRWE*, IV, p. 213)

He is neither for non-violence, nor for passive resistance but for armed struggle.

When in his essay "Heroism" Emerson asserts that the heroic people are not disturbed by adversities and writes, "...these rare

people set opinion, success, and life, at so cheap a rate, that they will not soothe their enemies by petitions, or the show of sorrow, but wear their own habitual grentness" (*WRWE*, I, p. 164), he seems to be saying what Lord Krishna says in the 32nd shloka of the 6th chapter of the Gita :

atma upamyena sarvatra
samam pasyati yorjuna
sukham va yadi va dukkham
sa yogi paramo matah (The Gita, VI, 32).

["He, O Arjuna, who sees with equality everything, in the image of his own self, whether in pleasure or in pain, he is considered a perfect yogi"].

In the Gita Lord Krishna teaches Arjuna that all living beings are to be regarded as equal to oneself. He does so when he says to Arjuna :

Yogayukto vishudhwatma vijitatma jitendriyah
Sarvabhutatma kurwannapi na lapyate (The Gita, V, 7)

["One who practices Yoga with a clear mind, who has controlled his physical needs and the senses and who believes himself equal to all other creatures, does not lose his equilibrium even while performing worldly duties"].

Emerson too holds this view and peceives eternal unity in the universe including its parts. He says so in his essay "Compensation" : "Whilst the world is thus dual, so is every one of its parts. The entire system of things gets represented in every particle" (*WRWE* I, p. 64).

He also agrees : "Genius detects through the fly, through the caterpillar, through the grub through the egg the constant individual; through countless individuals, the fixed species; through many species the genus; through all genera, the steadfast type; through all the kingdoms of organized life, the eternal unity" (*WRWE*, I, p. 10). He regards the history of mankind as the history of one man and all the doings of men as the deeds of one man. He says so when he arrives at two assertions in his essay "History" namely that "the mind is One, and that nature is its correlative .." (*WRWE*, I, p. 27).

Emerson asserts in his essay "History" : "To the poet, to the philosopher, to the saint, all things are friendly and sacred, all events profitable, all days holy, all men divine. For the eye is

fastened on the life, and slights the circumstance. Every chemical substance, every plant, every animal in its growth teaches the unity of cause, the variety of experience". (*WRWE*, I, pp. 9–10) Here we hear the resonance of the following statement of Lord Krishna :

yo mam pasyati sarvatra
sarvam cha mayi pashyati
tasyaham na pranashyami
sa cha me na pranashyati (The Gita, VI, 30)

["He who sees Me everywhere and sees all in Me; I am not lost to him nor is he lost to Me.]

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Manorama B. Trikha

INFLUENCE OF THE BHAGAVADGITA ON HENRY DAVID THOREAU

> In the morning I bathe my intellect in the stupendous and cosmogonal philosophy of the *Bhagvat-Geeta*, since whose composition years of gods have elapsed, and in comparison with which our modern world and its literature seems puny and trivial; and I doubt if that philosophy is not to be referred to a previous state of existence, so remote is its sublimity from our conceptions.[1]

Thus speaks Thoreau about the Gita in *Walden*. What grips his imagination is its philosophy which is an expression of "the very vitality of *Gita*" and proposes no "designs on society or nature or God" to use his own expression, but offers a way out to an individual "to live right on and breathe the circumambient air" having full faith in righteous action, which may lead him to the emancipation from desires and submission to the will of God. If Thoreau, who immersed himself in this philosophy, could discover the Gita, along with many Hindu scriptures, it is essentially a priviledge of belonging to that time and the place as the second quarter of the 19th century was a period of intellectual and religious reconstruction in America. Its native religious tradition had settled more or less into defence of orthodoxy. Its mercantile culture had nothing to sustain its society. The sensitive souls of the age grew restive about the existing conditions and tried to discover some solace by interacting with the literature of various writers from various lands, for example, Coleridge from England, Victor Cousin from France, Kant, Hegel and Schelling from Germany, Sadi from Persia, Confucius from China and various oriental scriptures, especially the Hindu scriptures like *Vedas*,

Upanishads, *The Laws of Manu*, the *Bhagavat Gita* and even *Hitopadesha* by Vishnu Sharma. They assimilated their philosophical thoughts with certain distinctive principles of Christianity and the result was a new school of thought named Transcendentalism. Emerson, being the expounder of the movement, was the potent factor in bringing the oriental into American life not as "an idea" but as "an actual science of positive knowledge" to use Bowen's phrase, and thus ushered in the society a new art of living. Much scholarship has gone in to assess as to how far the American spirit had been impregnated, directly or indirectly, by the infiltration of the Hindu thought during the 19th century but, as expected, the opinions vary. The only point of the common consensus is that it commenced with Ralph W. Emerson, Henry D. Thoreau, Amos B. Alcott and then found its way into the thoughts of more secular leaders of Transcendental movement like Parkar and Channing. If these Concordians are grouped together as a unique entity, it is, among other things, essentially because of their deep interest in Orientalism and particularly Hinduism. Challenging the concept of reason, introduced by Locke and Hume, they stood for the mystical element in human experiences, and emphasized that man must get beyond time and space; he must rely more on intuition than reason. In a letter written to Carlyle in 1844, Emerson confessed : "I only worship Eternal Buddh in the retirements and intermissions of Brahma." This eclectic method of adopting ideas from different religions and philosophical systems suited well the needs of the American intellectuals who wished to range the whole gamut and history of human thought.

Here arises a fundamental question as to why did Hindu scriptures, especially the Gita made a tremendous appeal when they had the whole treasures of Asia unlocked for them ? Among many vague or partially convincing replies comes Emerson's answer when he cried out ecstatically :

> I owed—my friend and I owed—a magnificent day to the *Bhagvat-Geeta.* It was the first of the books; it was as if an empire spoke to us, nothing small or unworthy, but large, serene, consistent, the voice of the old intelligences which in another age and climate had pondered and thus disposed of the same questions which exercise us.[a]

In the quest to find answers to those questions which "exercise us", Emerson, the most comprehensive thinker among the Transcen-

dentalists, could discover a source that had the potentiality to help an individual to satisfy the practical demands of work-a-day world without hampering man's aspiration for self-discovery. If any single volume could offer these Concordians something they aspired for, it was the Gita.

Thoreau, who was totally ignorant about the wealth of the oriental literature, met Emerson in 1837; he stayed at Emerson's residence in 1841 and acquired a deep understanding of the Hinduism through Emerson's personal library which had a very rich collection of the Hindu scriptures. They made an irresistable appeal to Thoreau who wrote on May 1841 about *The Laws of Manu* :

> The title "The Laws of Manu with the gloss of Culluca", comes to me with such a volume of sound as if it had swept unobstructed over the plains of Hindostan.[3]

About the *Dharma Shastra* he says :

> I cannot read a sentence in the book of the Hindoos without being elevated as upon the table-land of the Ghauts.[4]

Thoreau's fondness for these books attains a serious tone if one realises that Thoreau, who was introduced to these later than Emerson, made a different use of his reading. He adopted their central thoughts in his life and writings wisely selecting what suited his genius and temperament and ignoring the rest. Arthur Christy remarks in this context that "He was a new England Yogi conditioned by his nativity and his moral and religious heritage."[5] Thoreau's English friend, Thomas Cholmondeley, was so much impressed by Thoreau's life-style influenced directly by the Hindu scriptures, that he sent him in 1855 a precious collection of 44 volumes almost exclusively related to the ancient Hinduism. Those who emphasize that when Thoreau received them, he was no longer interested in reading them, perhaps have overlooked, knowingly or unknowingly, Thoreau's own reactions which are recorded in his letters. Immediately he wrote to his friend H.G.O. Blake :

> I have arranged my books in a case which I made in the meanwhile, partly of river boards. I have not dipped far into the new ones yet. One is splendidly bound and illuminated. They are in English, French, Latin, Greek and Sanskrit. I have not made out the significance of this godsend yet.[6]

Sharing his excitement about them, he expressed himself to Daniel Ricketson of New Bedford thus :

> I am familiar with many of them and know how to prize them. I send you this information as I might of the birth of a child.[7]

Thoreau knew too well that possession of the source was just not enough if he could not use it in the creation of himself.

II

> Depend upon it that, rude and careless as I am, I would fain practice the *Yoga* faithfully....To some extent, and at rare intervals, even I am a *Yogi*.[8]

When Thoreau made this pronouncement in a letter to Blake written in 1849, the critics proving him to be otherwise, concentrated on his limitations and took him to be antisocial, unsympathetic and even indifferent human being. Mark Van Doren in his book, *Thoreau : A Critical Study*, asserted that "he took figures and sentences and not ideas from his oriental reading."[9] A close examination of Thoreau's life reveals the contrary as he adopted the idea or the essence without imitating the procedure of the Hindu religion to be a *Yogi*. He comprehended the meaning of the term '*yogi*', as one who apprehends the 'pure self' that can progress towards the enlightenment leading to the beatific vision but never committed himself to the method prescribed by the Hinduism; but that hardly matters. In Chapter 6, Shloka 18th the Gita defines a true *yogi* thus : "when the disciplined mind is established in the self alone, liberated from all desires, then he is said to be harmonized (in yoga).[10] It confirms that 'yoga' is an activity of mind, an enlightenment from within. To attain this difficult but not impossible state of consciousness, the earlier Hindu scriptures recommended the intellectual exercise, knowledge termed as philosophy of Sankhya Yoga but the Gita suggested another approach, that is, the yoga of action, rather righteous action, named Karma Yoga. The latter expects man to fulfil the demands of normal life in full co-ordination with the detached intellect, which is called in the second chapter of the Gita the Yoga of Poise. (Shloka 56–72). Thoreau enacted on these doctrines of individual growth to enter the blessed state of experience; he emphasized on duty whether it be of providing for oneself the 'necessaries of life' or to abolish the slavery. He includes in it even the duty of 'civil-

disobedience'—a field where even Mahatma Gandhi found in Thoreau his mentor. Thorean intuitively realized the significance of the Gita's message of Karma Yoga—which involves the total participation of an individual in the 'Sharira Yatra' and makes man depend entirely on his own sources to accomplish his end without the slightest possibility of being discussed or distracted as it demands the complete engagement of the body, the senses, the mind and the soul. For those who might have questioned the validity of one approach over the other as Arjuna does in the Gita, who represents a questioning self that torments in the middle of the struggles of life, Sri Krishna resolves the doubt in the Ch. V, Shlokas 4–5 :

> The ignorant speaks of renunciation (Sankhya) and practice of work (Yoga) as different, not the wise. He who applies himself well to one, gets the fruit of both.
>
> × × × ×
>
> The status which is obtained by men of renunciation is reached by men of action also. He who sees the ways of renunciation and of action are one, he sees (truly).[11]

Thus the Gita refutes the misconceived notions that the yogi is a person who renounces not only this world and work but casts off his own body also which withers out because of disuse. On the contrary, it establishes the idea that a true yogi is one who is so thoroughly trained in his life that he can execute responsibilities without craving for fruit and dedicates his actions to God. Thoreau's whole life is an unprecedented example of this sort of yoga. He shifted from the life of action to the life of speculation and vice-versa as both are the medium of accomplishing one goal. Whatever the nature of work, he saw no dishonour in doing it, be it tending the garden at Emerson's residence or building his cottage at the Walden Pond, manufacting pencils or writing. He lived upto what the Gita affirms in Ch. III, Shloka 8 :

> Do thou thy allotted work, for action is better than inaction; even the maintenance of thy physical life cannot be effected without action.[12]

If the Gita asks the doer to work without entertaining any hope and to dedicate the work to God as sacrifice, it, obviously, is to be considered as duty done in the name of the Supreme Being that, inadvertently, changes the quality of the work. Thoreau embraced these principles a unique way. He says :

> The aim of the laborer should be, not to get his living, to get a "good job"; but to perform well a certain work.[13]

Such work would lead to "self-improvement", and "self-culture." This is what Frost says in "Two Tramps in Mud Time :

> And the work is the play for mortal stake
> Is the deed ever really done
> For Heaven and the future's sakes.[14]

The Gita is, perhaps, the first among the "Bibles of the World" to emphasize that 'work is duty.' Thoreau, believing fully in the potentiality of work for salvation, asserts that the work should not be done with immediate material end in view. He observes that "If a man has spent all his days about some business, by which he has merely got to be rich, as it is called, i.e., has got much money, many houses and barns and woods, lot, then his life has been a failure I think."[15] Thoreau propounded a new "Labor Doctrine" and added a moral dimension to it as the work done per se could import liberal education leading to self-improvement. Thoreau experimented in his school also on the principle of "Learning by doing" to borrow John Dewey's phrase. For that, Thoreau's full life subscribes to this idea.

The Gita's precept of the emancipation from desires finds its true reflection in Thoreau's "Doctrine of Simplicity." As a formidable critique of self and society, which earned him the reputation of being ' The Terrible Thoreau," he held a belief that life at the physical level should consist of fulfilling "necessaries for survival" only as it would assist an individual in two ways : firstly, by keeping a man away from the damaging effects of industrial civilization that promotes materialistic desires, and secondly by giving an individual enough time to improve himself in solitude. As Broderick states : "He was convinced that cities, in their anxiety to exclude nature from within their limits and to impose the urban pattern upon the surrounding region, were destroying their own source of vitality."[16] Thoreau reiterated that man must build a wholesome relation to nature in order to fulfil his spiritual needs. Hence his assertion : "I love to see anything that implies a simpler mode of life and a greater nearness to the earth."[17]

Thoreau's idea that nature is a mighty mean toward a fuller life and is a purifying force also shows the impact of the Gita, which takes Nature to be the reflector of the Supreme Soul. In Shloka 19 of Ch. 13, Sri Krishna says :

> Know thou that prakrit (nature) and purchase (soul) are both beginningless; know also that terms and modes are born of prakrit (Nature).

In Shloka 20, he further adds :

> Nature is said to be the cause of effect; instrument and agent and the soul is said to be the cause, in regard to the experience of pleasure and pain.[18]

There is a perfect rapport between the message of the Gita and Thoreau's thought when he recommends that there should be "the perfect correspondence of Nature with man, so that he is at home with her."[19] According to Thoreau man can be liberated by being close to nature : "I have come to this hill to see the sun go down, to recover sanity, and put myself again in relation with Nature."[20] In another volume of the *Journal* he says : "It is important, then, that we should air our lives from time to time by removals, and excursions into the fields and woods—starve our vices."[21] It confirms two things : (a) that Thoreau, unlike other transcendentalists, believes in the existence of evil which, of course, can be redeemed; (b) that the "marriage of soul with nature" would give birth to "imagination" that paves the way for lofty and sublime thoughts in life.

A close study of the Gita reveals that from Chapter 13 onwards its emphasis shifts from faith in nature to the quality of faith in general. The ultimate aim is not to indulge in the discoveries of the beauties of nature because nature too like the rest of the creation of God displays three Modes of "goodness" of "passion" and of "dullness." Man must rise above all that has inherited these three Modes. So 'return to nature', as Rousseau recommended, simply will not do. For this, man must develop the quality of non-attachment as the manifested forms are only a part of the 'Beginning ess'. It has been pointed out in Ch. 15, Shloka 3, that

> Its real form is not thus perceived here, nor its end, nor its beginning nor its foundation. Having cut off this firm rooted *Asvattam* (peepal tree) with strong sword of non-attachment.[22]

It is through the proper application of intelligence called 'intuition' by the transcendentalists that man can fight out attachment. This intelligence which separates man from other forms of

creation, also assures that man has the Divine foundation. Thoreau's return from the Walden, without even a flicker of ambivalence, at the appointed time, i.e., two years, two months and two days, is a perfect example of non-attachment.

Thoreau's belief in the supermacy of the Supreme Power with whom he 'never quarreled'—as he confessed to his aunt Lousia—remains unwavered. When he said that "To the philosophers, all sects, all nations, are alike. I like Brahma, Hari, Buddha, the Great Spirit, as well as God"[23], he broadened the definition of the words 'religion' and 'God'—and recommended the universal religion of the Gita.

He dedicated himself to the principles of the Gita so determinedly that even his habitual thoughts made his writings "a hymn to the Cause of Causes, the Spirit which vivifies and controls his own" to use Emerson's expression. It is his holy thoughts and living that made Emerson pay a glowing tribute to him :

> His soul was made for the noblest society. He had in short life exhausted the capacities of this world; wherever there is knowledge, wherever there is virtue, wherever there is beauty, he will find a home.[24]

To have an estimate as to how for Thoreau 'the yogi' has influenced Thoreau the writer let us examine briefly his masterpiece *Walden*.

III

> My purpose in going to Walden Pond was not to live cheaply nor to live dearly there, but to transact some *private business* with the fewest obstacles. (p. 26)

Walden, a book translated into more than ten foreign languages, and almost all the major Indian languagss, is the record of the personal experiences of the writer. It is written in the fundamental language of things themselves which unfold meaning from within. Thoreau made it specifically clear that there was a "private business" which led him to live in the woods and a survey of his biographical events reveals that it was two-fold : first, he wished to get down to work seriously on a book about the voyage which he took along with his brother John on Concord and Merrimack Rivers in 1839. The outcome was *A Week*; and second, he was eager to execute a "private business" of the self discovery as he knew for sure that "I thrive best on solitude."[25] Its reward was

Walden that sums up Thoreau's "search for perfection" to use Charles Anderson's words.

It was in the early spring of 1845 that Thoreau went out to the shores of Walden Pond and built his famous house. The opening chapter of the book, which consists of the 18 chapters, entitled 'Economy' seems to be a bare record of the daily chores of a man who has opted to live in the wilderness and tries to fulfil the "necessaries of life" like shelter, food, clothings etc., if the reader overlooks the important fact that only a highly disciplined individual trained in a staunch and vigorous manner, reminding one of a Hindu ascetic, could do so. However, the inspiration for recording the history of his own life of that particular period, which is exactly two years, but is compressed in the book into one cyclic year from spring to spring, perhaps for the artistic purpose, came from his fellow beings who posed to him searching questions about his life in the woods. These questions motivated Thoreau to seek in himself, the answers. What the seeker in him could glimpse is the *Walden*. Its proof lies in the event that when Frank Bejamin Sanborn moved to Concord in 1855, he was told that "there were three religious societies in the town—the unitarian, the orthodox and the Walden Pond."[26] The comment can be fully appreciated if one realises that the true aim of a religion is to create an 'ideal' or 'perfect' life, which is possible only if there exists an 'ideal' or 'perfect' man. The definition of such a man, according to the Gita is one who knows himself. For this one must hold a perfect correspondence with nature and must build a surrounding for himself based on the "Higher Laws" which can infuse a kind of culture that serves the whole man—body, senses, soul. *Walden* proves that Thoreau made a very determined move in this direction by being "a sojourner in nature", by acquiring self-knowledge tearing off the garb of so-called civilization and realizing God through his creation. In other words, he took "an adventure into life" and concluded that "a man who has at length found something to do will not need to get a new suit to do it." (p. 28) As the self-emancipation is essential for any spiritual achievement, he recommends that one should live in moderate circumstances as "Most of the luxuries, and many of the so-called comforts of life are not only indispensable, but positive hindrances to the elevation of mankind." (p. 22) However the man in coats and breeches appeared to him to be "scarecrows." Away from the world of "golden

and silver fetters" (p. 24) he practised Hindu-like austerities and pondered over the mysteries of life, world and God. To achieve this end he adopted a very methodical procedure of 'purification.'

> Before we can adorn our houses with beautiful objects the walls must be stripped, and our lives must be stripped, and beautiful housekeeping and beautiful living be laid for a foundation : now, a taste for the beautiful is most cultivated out of doors, where there is no house and no housekeeper. (p. 39).

In such surroundings man would not only "play" or "study" life but would "earnestly live it from beginning to end," (p. 47) according to the universal law of poise between the physical and the spiritual. Thoreau believed that the mode of diet also contributes significantly for the self-growth on which the Gita insists so much. He says :

> It was, for nearly two years after this, rye and Indian meal without yeast, potatoes, rice, a very little salt pork, molasses, and salt; and my drink, water. It was fit that I should live on rice, mainly, who loved so well the philosophy of India. (p. 54).
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> × × × ×
>
> I believe that every man who has ever been earnest to preserve his higher or poetic faculties in the best condition has been particularly inclined to abstain from animal food, and form much food of any kind. (p. 157).

The delight of living in the proximity of nature reminds him of the words of *Harivansa* :

> 'An abode without birds is like a meat without seasoning'. Such was not my abode, for I found myself suddenly neighbour to the birds, not by having imprisoned one, but having caged myself near them. (p. 71).

The company of "the thrilling songsters of the forests" as in the "Sounds", and the 'delicious' experiences of the "Solitude" made him "aware of the presence of something kindered to me." (p. 102). They gave him the "invitation to make my life of equal simplicity, and I may say innocence, with Nature herself" (p. 72). His personal kinship with the world around him promoted in him the philosophical thought of getting absorbed into 'Brahma', as he says, "I too may through pores of nature flow."[27] He feels the

same Magnificent Power in the chestnut tree or a fish which is manifested in Ch. 10 of the Gita in the Cosmic Vision :

> Nearest to all things is that power which fashions their being. *Next* to us the grandest laws are continually being executed. *Next* to us is not the workman whom we have hired, with whom we love so well to talk, but the workman whose work we are. (p. 103).

The Thoreau's spiritual beliefs are based on the monistic philosophy of the Gita which confirms that an individual is a part of the world and the world is a part of the Oversoul and together they constitute the 'Whole'. This union can be established by either of the tendencies of the 'Self'—self-transcending or self-contracting; if the former perceives the salt in the Cosmos, the latter finds the glimpses of the Cosmos in the self. Both ways of experiencing the self remain unique, and Thoreau could enjoy its magnanimity fully. As a result, the natural facts become symbols of the spiritual facts. He said, "My thought is a part of the meaning of the world and hence I use a part of the world as a symbol to express my thought."[28]

If one remembers what Thoreau said once, "the theme is nothing, the life is everything,"[29] one can arrive at the central meaning of Thoreau's analogies—a typical poetic device of the ancient scriptures—given to *Walden* and other Ponds. They, he says, existed before Adam and Eve were expelled from the Eden; Walden Pond "obtained a patent of Heaven to be the only Walden Pond in the world and distiller of celestial dews; It is a gem of the first water which Concord wears in her coronet." (p. 134). Not only that, the ponds have their own law of 'ethics' also, all intelligence is reflected in them. He says :

> A lake is the landscape's most beautiful and expressive feature. It is earth's eye; looking into which the beholder measures the depth of his own nature. The fluviatile trees next the shores are the slender eyelashes which fringe it, and the wooded hills and cliffs around are its overhanging brows. (p. 138).

Thoreau through his seemingly artless art has captured the beauty and the character of the lake. It is in the 9th Chapter that the book touches its pinnacle where Thoreau is simply wonderstruck at the immensity and magnificence of Walden and asks, "Walden,

it is you ? ..of all the characters I have known, perhaps Walden wears the best and best preserves its purity. Many men have been likened to it, but few deserve that honour." (p. 143).

Thoreau's instinct for the spiritual life makes him proclaim that "our whole life is startlingly moral" (p. 160) which, obviously, hints at the possibility of the perfection in man if he wins over his ignorance as the last chapters of the book like "Winter Visitors", "Winter Animals" suggest. It endows Thoreau with a new vision of 'Reality' and he says : "This one hillside illustrated the principle of all the operations of Nature. The Maker of this earth but patented a leaf." (p. 218).

There is a definite purpose in making 'Spring' as the last chapter, that is, to reaffirm that the Divinity displays itself in creation, annihilation and re-creation in a continuing process. He says : "So our human life but dies down to its roots, and still puts forth its green blade to eternity....Walden was dead and is alive again. But this spring it broke up more steadily, as I have said." (p. 220). The baffling mystery of life and death resolves automatically when he centers his faith in the all pervading Over-soul. After having this vision of the cosmos, if not exactly the Gita's cosmic vision of the Magnificent Power, he submits himself thus : "There needs no stronger proof of immortality. All things must live in such a light. O Death, there was thy string ? O Grave, where was thy victory, then ?" (p. 224).

After attaining full faith in the regeneration of life, he returns from the woods. He has transacted his "private business", and translated the truth in *Walden*. So he leaves

> the woods for as good a reason as I went there. Perhaps it seems to me that I had several more lives to live, and could not spare any more time for that one. (p. 228).

The reason that Thoreau offers, confirm two things : that he has acquired the virtue of non-attachment which he practised throughout his life so religiously that he never cherished any aim or ambition even; and that he, perhaps being influenced by the Gita believes in more than one way of accomplishing the goal in life, i.e., of 'knowing' oneself, perfecting oneself and identifying oneself with the Beginningless. In other words, being eclectic in his approach to life he does not stop at the Walden Pond—the destination of his

"pilgrimage through nature to spirit", to use Charles Anderson's expression—and tries to explore the further ranges through other ways. The only message he has for his fellow beings as the end product of his experiences is : "Simplicity, simplicity, simplicity !" ..."simplify simplify", (p. 74) as that is the only way out for the emancipation from desires—which is mistaken by the western thinkers as "resignation", but which, actually, is a discipline that opens up the treasures of the inner wealth. Having experienced the world within Thoreau says :

> I lay down the book and go to my well for water, and lo ! there I meet the servant of the Brahmin, priest of Brahma and Vishnu and Indra, who still sits in his temple on the Ganges reading the Vedas, or dwells at the root of a tree with his crust and water jug. I meet his servant came to draw water for his master, and our buckets as it were grate together in the same well. The pure Walden water is mingled with the sacred water of the Ganges. (p. 212).

Thus, *Walden*, "a golden book in any century of the best books", to use W. H. Audson's phrase, ends leaving behind a question : Has not Thoreau, who fed upon the Hindu scriptures, returned in kind to us full measure ?

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Ambika Sharma

THE INFLUENCE OF THE BHAGAVADGITA ON WALT WHITMAN

Whitman's was a loving, all embracing, rugged, voluminous nature. He had in his heart atoms of affection, sympathy and brotherhood that drew him to the high and low; noble and ignoble; thief, drunkard and prostitute. He had some of his friends from among New York's bus drivers and ferry-boat crews. All this goes to show his magnanimity, sincerity and large heartedness.

Such a temperament and mental make up found a ready guide and companion in the book of Indian Philosophy, the Bhagavadgita.[1] Besides this, Whitman spoke fondly of *Sakuntala*—the Indian drama and the great Hindu epic *The Ramayan.* Whitman found a type of comfort in the Bhagavadgita—here he found in solid concrete form what he felt beneath his consciousness. That inarticulate indefinable knowledge that is the wealth of saints and philosophers, Whitman found sprinkled and scattered all over the Bhagavadgita. The effect of the book on him is such that the body of several of his poems exudes and releases this impact galore. The entire *Leaves of Grass* is flooded with thoughts that find precise parallels in the Bhagavadgita.

The Principal Thoughts contained in the Bhagavadgita :

Life is a constant, perennial struggle and every individual has to deal with it in his own way. Every man has to face the acid test conducted by life and undergo all the trials and tribulations on his own. No one can expect his share of dilemmas, difficulties to be transferred to someone else. But a book like the Bhagavadgita is a source of guidance, comfort, solace and inspiration to many an aching heart and a wounded, torn, forlorn soul. The Bhaga-

vadgita is an amalgam of the many currents of thought (from the Vedas, Upanishads). However, it reconciles and chisets those thought structures and remains unique and complete in itself.

The Bhagavadgita shows to men a path of acceptance of worldly duties and relationships and does not deny them as an illusion. It treats them as opportunities for the attainment and accomplishment of spiritual freedom. It preaches a practical mysticism and thus escapes from getting obsessed with a theory.

Every being is composed of a body and a soul. With such an integrated personality he can attain perfection by doing his duty devotedly and whole-heartedly, and without having an eye on the results.

This idea would be palpable if it is analysed with a crystal clear mind. It is a truth universally acknowledged that one who enters a world of wicked deeds or to take an extreme example becomes a criminal or a murderer is bound to reap the fruits of his actions. All one needs to do is to apply this very principle in the opposite direction i.e., that one who with unswerving, unflinching devotion does his duty would in the ultimate analysis emerge on the top; would be a victor in his field, a master in his vocation and a success all the way.

The Bhagavadgita is persistently preaching us not to stir from the path of duty and so if we do this then the results are but forseeable, calculable. The Bhagavadgita puts force on the idea of not caring for the fruits because if one is obsessed with what should happen then with this constant thought nagging his mind he might go astray from the path of duty and thereby try to adopt shortcuts and underhand means to make the 'fruits' his own and in such a case success would elude him altogether.

The Bhagavadgita believes that doing one's duty is complementary to attaining spiritual freedom and hence it propagates the path of action or the 'Karma Marga'.

The author of Bhagavadgita makes it very clear that the world is a battle-field, a working ground and labouring, struggling and surviving in it is essential and is our sacred duty. True renunciation is the shedding up of useless thoughts, superficial attractions that drive us away from the track of duty and tempt us time and again with rosy pictures of fruits that we expect to get. A duty bound and duty conscious soul can eventually move with rhythmic

steps into a way of living where it can detach itself totally from all emotions, feelings, wishes, all narrow-mindedness, ill will and can dedicate all to the Supreme. To give one instance such a man would be in a position to segregate, sequester himself from all malice, hatred, malevolence while fighting in a war and attacking his opponent. He would be performing his duty in the true sense and there would be no damage done or sin committed; instead only a mission would be carried out sincerely in this manner. Thus, the world is the matrix dwelling in which one can attain spiritual upliftment.

Immortality of the Soul :

In every human being the soul is a non-pareil entity as it is a drop, a resplendent atom, a glittering particle of the Over Soul or the Creator. The galaxy of souls that enlightens this universe owes its origin directly to God. It is a divine aroma that is present in all of us. The Bhagavadgita proclaims with vehement fervour the fact of the immortality of the soul. It is a thing invincible, indestructible and unconquerable. No power can distort or damage it. Lord Krasna explains to a despondent Arjuna the distinction between 'Self' and body and tells him that it is futile to grieve or lament for something that is imperishable. One verse of the Bhagvadgita runs thus :

nai nam chindanti sastrani
nai nam dahati pavakah
na cai nam kledayanty apo
na sasayati marutah (II, 108)[2]

(Weapons do not cleave this self, fire does not burn him, water do not make him wet; nor does the wind make him dry).

This one idea finds an ardent advocate and a vociferous supporter in Whitman. In the entire *Leaves of Grass* this fact appears as a motif and gives a new touch, a new flavour to every verse. Whitman's rhapsodic optimism; his never ending love for humanity; his quest for the unknown, the sublime finds in this fact tremendous satisfaction. After each verse he starts with renewed fervour, refreshed verve to sing of the spirit, of its progression, its might and power. He writes in the poem 'How Solemn As One By One" :

> I see behind each mask that wonder a kindred soul...The soul ! yourself I see, great as any, good as the best,

Waiting secure and content, which the bullet could never kill. Nor the bayonet stab O friend.[3]

The Body and the Soul :

The immortality of the soul is not all. What is still more significant, is the fact that it is a phenomenon that is far superior to the perishable, mutable body of a being. Lord Krasna states that the body is the 'field' and the soul is the 'Knower of the field', and he further gives the discrimination between them :

Ksetrajnam Capi mam viddhi
sarvaksetresu bharata
Ksetraksetrajnayor jnanam
yat taj jnanam matam mama[4]

(Know Me as the knower of the field in all fields, O Arjuna. The knowledge of the field and its knower, do I regard as true knowledge).

To understand and appreciate the spiritual power in us, it is essential that we know something of the body. We can't negate the one in order to grasp the identity of the other. Both are relevant, meaningful to start with and only by steps can we move towards the higher, nobler truth. The body is after all the shrine, the temple in which dwells the spirit. A pilgrim drawn towards the deity has to have reverence and affection for the holy place as well. The Bhagavadgita states the dual nature of God :

bhumir apo nalo vayuh
Kham mano buddhir eva ca
ahamkara iti yam me
bhinna prakrtir astadha[5]

(Earth, water, fire, ether, air, mind and understanding and self-sense—this is the eightfold division of my nature).

This dual aspect of every man's personality is well illustrated in Whitman's poetry. He writes in 'Starting from Paumanok' :

I will make the poems of materials, for I think they are to be the most spiritual poems,
And I will make the poems of my body and of mortality,
For I think I shall then supply myself with the poems of my soul and of immortality.[6]

His motive is crystal clear. He wishes to start from the lowest point of the ladder and climb every step after imbibing the wealth of experience that he encounters in the process. He is not biased

or narrow-minded while dealing with the bodily aspect of man.

In his poetry itself, we glimpse a total development in the personality of the poet. As we flick through every page of his, we find him ascending, rising, climbing, floating upwards towards spiritual enlightenment and perfect understanding. In 'Song of Myself' he proclaims :

> Clear and sweet is my soul, and clear and sweet is all that is not my soul.
> Lack one lacks both, and the unseen is proved by the seen.
> Till that becomes unseen and receives proof in its turn.[7]

Till one delves deep into the mystery of the miracle that is our body one can't go forward to overpower the senses in order to fathom the spiritual wealth within him—this is Whitman's logic. If one has pre-conceived notions and prejudices one would reject Whitman as an irrational man with bizarre views. But one who believes in practical, down to earth philosophy and wants to consider the case of even the layman will agree to the observation that Whitman is a 'modern Yogi and a truly practical philosopher.

With such a keen observation and a clear vision the body appears to him pure, pious, sacred and almost with a religious fervour he announces :

> The man's body is sacred and the woman's body is sacred[8].

Whitman attaches credence only to authentic experimentation. His is the brain of an innovative artist, of a connoisseur. He believes that the body and the soul are two facets of the same spectrum and mingle in the personality of every individual. Once that he observes, understands the entire scope of his physical self he turns to the more subtle, more intricate organ of himself—the soul, the true self. Towards the end of the 'Song of Myself' he concludes :

> I have said that the soul is not more than the body.
> And I have said that the body is not more than the soul.
> And nothing, not God, is greater to one than one's *self* is.[9]

The Concept of 'Maya' :

While tracing the development of thought, wisdom in the

Bhagavadgita we realise that Lord Krsna comes out with these profound truths, facts connected with the soul when he perceives the anxiety, desperation, hopelessness of Arjuna. Arjuna is a man suffering from utter dejection, despondency. He has lost heart, his soul is being torn with pangs of attachment and the consciousness of duty. He is in a dilemma. He feels it is impossible for him to kill his near and dear ones. Here he stands for all men suffering from spiritual anguish; he is a representative of those who are forced to confront the seamy side of life. There are times in our lives when we discover that we have been hurled into a bottomless pit, into an abyss of despair and suffering. On such moments as these do we realise that there is something 'in' us that is undergoing torture because physically we have incurred no hurt or wound. When that 'something' inside man throbs with pain, does he realise how transitory all the worldly pleasures are and how superficial and superfluous the physical, bodily aspect of life is. The sensation of spiritual trauma sets a man thinking in the direction of the spirit and then he realises why the world is labelled 'Maya' or 'delusion' and in extreme cases 'illusion'. But it is a delusion only for those who wish to be deceived and those who realise the significance of the spirit, free themselves from the jaws, clutches of this confusing, baffling sphere. It really is a perplexing cobwed, a maze, an enigma which confounds us by its entangling variety. And if one goes marching on such a road without thinking of the real essence in him then towards the sunset of his life he feels cheated and finds that he has reached nowhere. Lord Krsna announces in the Bhagavadgita :

na ham prakasah sarvasya
yogamay asamavrtah
mudho yam na bhijanati
loko man ajam avyayam[10]

(Veiled by My creative power I am not revealed to all. This bewildered world knows Me not, the unborn, the unchanging).

So, the Oversoul stays enveloped in a cloak of 'Maya'. The world all the time sizzles, simmers and brews with activity and action that can contribute to material aggrandisement. Man joins this mad rush for power and pelf, and plunges himself headlong into this outer show of God's creative power and thereby forgets and forsakes his spiritual master. He gets obsessed with the year-

nings and longings of the flesh and in the process ignores the voice within him that consistently urges him to stay on the path of righteousness and duty. Moral, spiritual aggrandisement sounds to him vain and futile. Instead of carving for himself a pathway of devotion and dutv, working on which he can eventually reach a higher pedestal, he gets engrossed in the maddening world of materialism.

Thus, 'Maya' assumes a sinister shade as it becomes the cause of man's animal existence but one can't override the fact that the fault lies in man as the key to all stays in his hands. Such a mist of 'delusion' becomes quite clear to the penetrative gaze of Whitman and he says in lines written under the title 'Apparitions' :

> A VAGUE mist hanging round half the pages ?
> (Sometimes how strange and clear to the soul.
> That all these solid things are indeed but apparitions, concepts, non-realities)[11]

No doubt he has not rejected the claims of the body but as his vision ripens and matures he declares that the claims of the spirit are far more substantial and legitimate and have right to guide one in one's worldly pursuits. The unsubstantiality of things that appear solid to one's mortal eyes is well expressed by Whitman in the poem 'Are You The New Person Drawn Toward Me' :

> Do you see no further than this facade, this smooth and tolerant manner of me ?
> Do you suppose yourself advancing on real ground towards a real heroic man ?
> Have you no thought O dreamer that it may be all maya, illusion ?[12]

The meaning of these lines can be grabbed and held for scrutiny in the light of two stunningly striking, thought provoking lines of 'Perfections' :

> Only themselves understand themselves and the like of themselves,
> As souls only understand souls.[13]

The poet here makes it abundantly specific that what appears on the surface as the truth is not the strict truth. This is the case with an individual as well as with the world. All relationships fail to hold meaning if they are developed on an artificial plane i.e., on the basis of 'appearances'. The true beauty of an individual

lies in his inner integrity and sobriety and once one grasps this one can move a step ahead and go to the length of gauging the spiritual beauty that exists in each and every person. This 'principle' can be enlarged, magnified and can be applied to all worldly phenomena.

This world in all its dazzling, kaleidoscopic variety, the mad rush for power of all its habitants; the cut throat competition that springs as a consequence and the feelings of jealousy, envy, anger, hatred, malice, pride that are the offsprings of such a system—all these appear meaningless and shrivel into the oblivion of nothingness when viewed from this angle (i.e. according to the 'principle' mentioned earlier).

The Path of Duty is itself the Path of Salvation :

According to the Bhagavadgita one's sole search in life should be directed towards understanding the 'real reality' i.e. one's spiritual potential, inner power and true identity and for spiritual progression the best means, and method is the observance of one's duty in life. The strictest adherence to it results in spiritual betterment, spiritual emancipation and this is a way treading on which one can eventually embrace the 'Supreme'. Such an approach to life would make our over-indulgence in materialism impossible since the course of duty is one of righteousness and henceforth calls for moderation and sacrifice. So be it a warrior, or a student or a ruler or anyone else if he is performing his duty and striving to seek the hidden hand that is behind everything then he is geadually moving on the path of 'Karmayoga'. What is still more important is that one should not be obsessed with the 'fruits' or 'results' of one's action and should try and dedicate all to him that is responsible for everything and is the 'ALL IN ALL'. A work done in a spirit of detachment and dedication is the sincerest sacrifice, the most valuable offering that one can lay at his feet. This is stated in the Bhagavadgita with precision and clarity :

niyatam kuru karma tvam
Karma jyayo hy akarmanah
Sarirayatra pi ca te
na prasidhyed akarmanah[14]

It further explains :

matkarmkrn matparmo
madbhaktah sangavarjitah
nirvairah sarvabhutesu
yah sa mam eti pandava[15]

(The Lord here says—He who does work for Me, he who looks upon Me as his goal, he who worships Me, free from attachment, he who is free from enmity to all creatures, he goes to Me, O Arjuna).

A life of such sincere devotion to duty brings as its reward an EVENNESS OF MIND, an inner poise, a calmness that makes one's stay in this world meaningful. The example quoted earlier can now be understood clearly, i.e. if a warrior fights in such a frame of mind where his work is worship to him and where there is no space left for such useless, paltry, petty feelings as anger, ill-will, selfishness and hatred then he won't incur sin even while being a participant in a violent battle. His task assumes the proportions of sacredness, it becomes a religious duty which he should fulfil.

Whitman at several points brings out this aspect regarding work, duty and salvation. A man who has lost himself in his work and has become one with it has, come nearer to God. In 'Song of the Exposition' he writes :

Ah little recks the laborer,
How near his work is holding him to God,
The loving laborer through space and time[16].

While speaking of an humble worker in his poem 'The Ox-Tamer' Whitman becomes pensive and in a moment of deep reflection says :

Now I marvel what it can be he appears to them (books, politics, poems, depart—all else departs).
I confess I envy only his fascination—my silent, illiterate friend,
Whom a hundred oxen love there in his life on farms...[17].

The poet here salutes a man for whom work is worship; he illustrates the dignity of labour. Great men and women are those who understand their mission in life and live to do all for its accomplishment, attainment. Whitman focusses his attention on true greatness and defines a great city in 'Song of the Broad-Axe' :

Where no monuments exist to heroes but in the common words and deeds,

and further,

Where children are taught to be laws to themselves and to depend on themselves,
Where equanimity is illustrated in affairs,
Where speculations on the soul are encouraged[18]

The poet here declares that where work fuses blends, mingles with a spiritual flavour, there greatness takes birth.

When man is worn out and feels exhausted because of fruitless toil he questions the validity of existence. He reasons out and tries to figure out as to why he should continue an endeavour which has only hopelessness to offer. In 'O Me ! O Life' the poet puts forth a question :

The question, O me ! so sad, recurring—what good amid these.
O me, O life ?

The 'Answer' given by the poet himself sounds like an echo from The Bhagavadgita :

That you are here—that life exists and identity,
That the powerful play goes on, and you may contribute a verse[19]

Man is not obliging anybody by doing his duty as in it lies the meaning of his existence. By doing what he should do he is making a tiny, minute contribution to the scheme drawn out by God for the universe. So when one encounters obstacles that hinder his progress on the road of duty and prevent him from fulfilling his noble mission in life then one should make it a point to stay unruffled, undisturbed and should struggle to forge ahead. If one's determination is firm and faith unshakeable then he can brush aside all troubles, can steer clear of all difficulties to continue his journey with the same sterling confidence. Whitman gives such an advise to a soldier in 'Beat ! Beat ! Drums !' :

Beat ! beat ! drums !—blow ! bugles ! blow !
Make no parley-stop for no expostulation,
Mind not the timid-mind not the weeper or prayer[20]

If a man has done his work with zeal and zest and with the full consent and support of his heart and spirit then he need not get

depressed or morose, if the fruits do not do justice to his labour. Hard work never goes unrewarded; by immersing himself in work the man has put his dormant energies to work and has grown in stature in a unique way.

There comes a point in life when all these things (results, fruits) become immaterial, when man's vision widens to encompass the true facts of existence and he can see for himself how transitory all worldly benefits are and therefore, don't deserve attention. In a moment of introspection the poet concludes in 'To A foil'd European Revolutionaire' :

> Did we think victory great ?
> So it is—but now it seems to me, when it cannot be help'd that defeat is great[21]

Rebirth :

Many lines of thought found in *Leaves of Grass* conform to the facts, principles laid down in the Bhagavadgita. Whitman has a firm belief in 'rebirth' which is a phenomenon that has been accepted and stated by various sages, scholars and philosophers of the Hindu religion. The Christian and Muslim philosophers, however, believe in a 'day of judgement' and attach no credence to the theory of 'rebirth'. One verse of the Bhagavadgita runs thus :

> jatasya hi dhruvo mrtyur
> dhruvam janma mrtasya ca
> tasmad apariharye rthe
> na tvam socitum arhasi[22].

This verse states that death is an inevitable end for every object that is born and birth is certain for one that is dead. It is the unchangeable law laid down by God and it would be foolishness on the part of man to nourish desires that are contradictory to this law. So grieving for the perishable is not the vocation of the truly wise, learned and saintly.

In the poem 'Old Ireland' Whitman asks a mother who is bewailing the loss of her son on his grave, not to mourn or shed tears as the soul is guided by the law of rebirth and is reborn in some clime or the other. The body is a mere outfit, garb, apparel that is sported for sometime by the soul and then changed. The poet's words ring in the ears in a logical sentence :

> Yet a word ancient mother

You need crouch there no longer on the cold ground
with forehead between your knees...
For know you the one you mourn is not in that grave,
It was an illusion, the son you love was not really dead,
The Lord is not dead, he is risen again young and strong
in another country.[23]

All the anguish that one experiences on the demise of a near and dear one is caused because man gets attached to a particular shape, figure and can't perceive that it is a meagre blanket, underneath which lies the eternal essence. Such wisdom doesn't hold appeal for fresh, raw ears and even if it appeals to them it fails to really pervade their consciousness as it can be understood in earnest only by persons who have moulded their selves in spiritual discipline and made themselves spiritually sturdy and powerful thereby.

However, a perennial cycle, chain, series of births and rebirths as a law, a norm appears senseless even superfluous. But it gains in weight, it assumes great value because in it lies the key to salvation, to 'nirwana', to union with the Absolute.

Various Births—Opportunities for Redemption :

God's plan of the universe has been drawn with the brush of perfection and nothing in it is meaningless. The benevolent Creator knows that limitations, weaknesses, shortcomings, frailties and follies suffuse our beings. In his large heartedness he values and takes note of each and every attempt that we make to resist and combat these flaws, weaknesses (in our character) in order to stay steady on the track of duty. If in a single lifetime an individual falls from the path of righteousness and makes a mess of his life he is granted another opportunity to redeem his 'self'; to continue his march on his journey towards a noble aim. But one's inclination has to be sincere, pure as one's noble efforts in one life abide with him after death and help him in his spiritual progress in other lives (till he reaches his ultimate destination). So, all the vile, ignoble deeds serve as minus points as they drain him out of his creative potential or his power of doing the 'good'. This can be called the law of 'karma'. This idea is portrayed beautifully by Whitman in the lines entitled 'As I Watch'd The Ploughman Ploughing' :

As I watch'd the ploughman ploughing,

Or the sower sowing in the fields, or the harvester harvesting
I saw there too, O life and death, your analogies;
(Life, life is the tillage, and Death is the harvest according.[24]

The Bhagavadgita is optimistic on the point of redemption and believes that each and every created soul will one day reach that zone of tranquility, that region of serenity from where there would be no return. Through forgiveness, repentance and the balm of guidance it would merge with God from whom it originated. It says :

prayatnad yatamanas tu
yogi samsuddhakilbisah
anekajanmasamsiddhas
tato yati param gatim[25].

(The yogi who strives with assiduity, cleansed of all sins, perfecting himself through many lives, then attain to the highest goal).

Whitman emerges in his lines as an ardent admirer and supporter of this idea. His belief in the 'redemption' of the soul is firm. The rebellious elements in every being do get curbed and cured eventually and a time comes when a person is purged of all sins and as a result the soul attains 'the perfect union'. As stated in the Bhagavadgita this duration of the soul's journey might run as a string through many life times. Whitman illustrates this idea through short, eye catching lines bearing the title 'Gliding O'er All' :

Gliding O'er all through all,
Through Nature, Time and Space,
As a ship on the waters advancing,
The voyage of the soul—not life alone,
Death, many deaths I'll sing[26].

The soul is a twinkling star within us which has been plucked out of the divine firmament. The aspiration of this ethereal star is to float upwards, to glide, soar and get back to its roots. It strives valiantly, struggles with an unending zeal and undiminished fervour to reach its home and hearth. It inspires every human being to make efforts to better himself so as to acquire spiritual perfection. In the poem 'Life' Whitman is charmed by this aspect of the soul :

"Ever the undiscouraged, resolute, struggling soul of man
(Have former armies fail'd ? then we send fresh armies—
and fresh again;)
Ever the soul dissatisfied, curious, unconvinced at last;
Struggling to-day the same–battling the same[27]

The Bhagavadgita, as already mentioned, speaks of 'life' or of 'lives' as pilgrimages for the salvation and release of the soul. This idea holds tremendous appeal for Whitman. In several of his poems in which he deals with 'death' he accepts it is a gateway to further spiritual progression and ultimate consummation. Death is to him a welcome factor as it opens the doors to new life, new existence. In the poem 'Gods' the poet writes :

O Death, (for life has served its turn)
Opener and usher to the heavenly mansion,
Be thou my God[28].

The poet admits that like any ordinary person he too once felt that life was all, but after much analysis, rethinking and reexamination; after experiencing things with a widened vision, a stretched imagination, he is in a position to state with conviction that death has its own elegant designs, plans. In the poem 'Night On The Prairies' he pours out his feelings in a scientifically chalked out order :

Now I absorb immortality and peace,
I admire death and test propositions...
I was thinking, the day most splended till I saw what the not-day exhibited...
O I see now that life cannot exhibit all to me, as the day cannot
I see that I am to wait for what will be exhibited by death[29].

The plan of God as spelt out by the Bhagavadgita in clear terms where life and death each have a part to play, rings clear in the ears of Whitman and he concludes the poem 'And Yet Not You Alone' with these lines :

Duly the needed discord-parts offsetting, blending, weaving from you, from Sleep, Night, Death itself, The rhythmus of *Birth Eternal* [30]

In still more precise and clear words in the poem 'Death's valley' he gives us a feel of the uniqueness of death which can in one powerful stroke transform the dwelling place of the soul :

Thee, holiest minister of heaven – the envoy, usher guide at last of all,
Rich, florid, loosener of the structure-knot call'd life,
Sweet, peaceful, welcome Death[31]

These lines have a peculiar singing quality and the poet utters them in rhapsodic anticipation as though he were going to hug, embrace his beloved. This only goes on to explain and enumerate the depth of his understanding of the phenomenon of life and death and brings to the surface his saintly sagacity.

The Idea of Nirwana :

Like a true 'Yogi' he too has in his imagination, thinking the one cherished aspiration which is the treasure of a selected few i.e. the idea of 'Nirwana'. The tiny, pearl-like poem 'Twilight' runs thus :

The soft voluptuous opiate shades,
The son just gone, the eager light dispell'd (I too will soon be gone dispell'd)
A haze—*nirwana*—rest and right—oblivion.[32]

Once an individual attains 'nirwana' he goes beyond the world of petty desires and longings and moves into an orbit which has only blessedness, solace, tranquility and peace to offer.

Lord—The Supracosmic, Changeless 'Brahman' :

The Bhagavadgita attaches credence, lays emphasis on the concept of the existence of ONE 'Absolute' who is 'the Imperishable', 'the Undefinable', 'the Unmanifested', 'the Omnipotent', 'the Unthinkable', 'the Unchanging' and 'the Immobile', 'the Constant'. Beyond the unmanifested sphere or 'prkrit' there is yet another 'Unmanifested Eternal Being'. He is the Supracosmic Unmanifested who is not subject to change and is eternal. He is the 'Brahman', the highest goal. Those who attain him pass beyond the perpetual cycle of day and night. Lord Krsna in the Bhagavadgita states this fact thus :

avyakta ksara ity uktas
tam ahuh paramam gatim
yam prapya na nivartante
tad dhama paramam mama[33].

God Contains all in Himself but is touched by Nothing :

Further, the Bhagavadgita gives an extremely forceful idea which can spring only from an inspired, pure moment of spiritual

intuition. The depth and profundity of the idea is touching and for a person who understands the magnificence of the soul, it in a way lays bare the divine mystery and makes everything, clear and palpable to reason. The Bhagavadgita puts it thus :

ya ha kasasthito ni yam
vayuh sarvatrago mahan
atha sarvani bhutani
matsthani ty upadharaya[34]

As the space holds air, contains it and yet stays untouched by it in like manner the 'Absolute' contains all in him. All things abide in him but he does not abide in them. This gives us a view of the yoga of divine power. God transcends his creation to such an extent that we can't say that he stays in it. The Bhagavadgita here rejects 'PANTHEISM' which propagates the fact that everything is God and holds for scrutiny 'PANENTHEISM' which firmly believes that everything subsists, dwells, resides in God. So gigantic is his personality that he sustains all in himself and yet this finite process is not a final and perfect manifestation of him.

These ideas of the Bhagavadgita bringing out the essential nature of the Almighty are splashed in exuberant detail all over the *Leaves of Grass*. In 'Song of Myself' several lines reverberate in the ears and float in the intellect serving as a reminder of the words uttered by Lord Krasna :

I pass death with the dying and birth with the new-wash'd babe,
I am not on earth nor an adjunct of an earth
I am the mate and companion of people, all just as immortal and fathomless as myself...[35]

God in all his majestic grace and glory, with the aura of divine wisdom encircling him announces :

With music strong I come, with my cornets and my drums,
I play not marches for accepted victors only, I play marches for
Conquer'd and slain person's[36]

God is the source of all inspiration, he is the goal of all devotees. He is the means as well as the end because with his grace only can one think of galvanizing one's latent spirituality :

To me the converging objects of the universe perpetually flow,

All are written to me, and I must get what the writing means.[37]

God is a subtle personality. In him all paradoxes, contradictions mingle and disappear as he is the fountain head of all creation. Lord Krasna in the Bhagavadgita elaborates upon this trait of the 'Divine' by revealing the fact that God is the source of all and thereby combines the past, the present as well as the future in his personality :

aham atma gudakesa
sarvabhutasayasthitah
aham adis ca madhyam ca
bhutanam anta eva ca[38]

In the 'Song of Myself' this fact is very faithfully represented and it moves forward in a surging motion :

I am an acme of things accomplish'd and I an encloser of things to be

My feet strike an apex of the apices of the stairs,

On every step bunches of ages, and larger bunches between the steps,

All below duly travl'd, and still I mount and mount[39]

Timelessness of the Supreme :

'Time' is a limiting factor in the life of all human beings. We are all the slaves of 'time'. It rules our lives because we are mortal, subject to birth and death. It appears to us that phases, eras are expiring but the truth is that we are ourselves withering out, fading away. For him who is the 'All in All' time is a never ending phenomenon. He structures and cements the cosmos with his potent power and time is a mere subsidiary tool in his hands. The Lord in the Bhagavadgita says :

Kalo smi lokaksayakrt pravrddho
lokan sama iartum iha prevrttah[40].

(Time am I, world destroying, grown mature, engaged here in subduing the world)

At one point in the 'Song of Myself' the words run thus :

I know I have the best of time and space, and was never measured and never will be measured[41].

The timelessness of the supreme is brought out with great elan in 'Chanting The Square Deific' :

Old Brahm I, and I Saturnius am;

Not time affects me—I am Time, old, modern as any,

Unpersuadable, relentless, executing righteous judgements[42].

Whitman's love for India was immesurable and not just skin deep. It was not a present day American's fancy for a country that carries with it all the oomph and glamour of the exotic east. It was the spiritual heritage; the rich, mature philosophic thought of India that drew Whitman to it. It cast a spell of enchantment on Whitman, so much so that whenever he muses in the direction of the 'spirit' he can't stop himself from referring to the "epics of Asia's" and "the elder religions". India is a guiding spirit to him, in man's exploration of the real reality, the hidden truth. In 'Passage to India' the country appears with her "flowing literatures, tremendous epics, religions, castes, old occult Brahma interminably far back, the tender and junior Buddha..."[43].

The influence of the Bhagavadgita on Whitman is immense as in it he found a chiselled counteanance of the spiritual thought of this Oriental country.

In respect of poetic style Whitman is very original and as a result vastly different from the other poets. He was a mystic bent upon communicating to the reader the reality at the back of things. As a result, he takes pains to enhance the expressive power of his words and even employs slangs, colloquialisms to achieve this purpose. He makes the fullest use of the free verse and the power of his ideas takes the shape of a lovely froth that settles over his omnivorous lines. Whitman in his approach to life, to poetry, to style and to all things appears to be echoing this thought of the Bhagavadgita :

Sreyan svaadharmo vigunah
paradharmat svanusthitat
svabhavaniyatam karma
kurvan na pnoti kilbisam[44].

(Better is one's own law though imperfectly carried out, than the law of another carried out perfectly. One does not incur sin when one does the duty ordained by one's own nature).

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ARNOLD'S CONCEPT OF DUTY AND THE BHAGAVADGITA

Mathew Arnold read the Bhagavadgita through translations. In his poetical works the impact of the Bhagavadgita is remarkably discernible. He was born in an age which was surcharged with orientalism due to the increasing political and cultural intimacy of the West and the East. For this reason his interest in the Bhagavadgita increased day after day. He particularly admired the doctrine of *Nishkam Karma.* He carefully read the translation of the Bhagavadgita translated by C. Wilkins, as his letter to Arthur Hugh Clough shows. In one of his letters to Clough on March 1, 1948, he wrote : "I am disappointed the oriental wisdom, God grant it were mine, pleased you not"[1]. The two, had been, no doubt, acquainting themselves with Oriental wisdom sometime before this date. On March 4, 1848, he wrote, again, to Clough : "The Indian distinguish between *meditation* and *absorption* and knowledge : and between abandoning practice and abandoning the fruits of action and all respect thereto. This last is a supreme step, and dilated throughout the poem."[2]

"The poem" referred to in the letter is the Bhagavadgita. Arnold's language and a few words used in the above letter show that Arnoid had read Wilkins' translation of the Bhagavadgita. Wilkins translates the twelfth *Sloka* of the twelfth chapter thus :

> Knowledge is better than practice, meditation is distinguished from knowledge, forsaking the fruits of action from meditation, for happiness, hereafter is derived from such forsaking.[3]

Again, in rendeaing the forty third *sloka* of the second chapter, Wilkins introduces the word *absorption,* for which there is no

equivalent in the original. He also used the word *meditation* for both the Sanskrit words *dhyana* and *samadhi.*

The peculiarities of rendering are in none of the other translations available to Arnold such as Schlegel's Latin translation published in 1823, Laseen's amplified and improved version of the latter published in 1846. It is a different matter that Arnold might have also consulted either Schlegel or Lassen, Cockburn Thomson, who published his translation in 1855. Lionel Trilling believes :

> Arnold had at his disposal several translations of the *Gita*...I suspect that Arnold read the essay of W. Von Humboldt on the *Gita* (Berlin, 1826) and the improved and amplified Latin rendering of A. W. Von Schlegel (1823)[4]

These facts have now been confirmed by Kenneth Allott's publications of Arnold's reading lists contained in his three early diaries.[5] Professor Danial Ingalls of Harvard informed Prof. S. Nagrajan that Humboldt uses words like *Vertiefung* and *Insichgekehrtheit* to explain the meaning of *Yoga.*[6]

H.F. Lowry in his editorial note to Arnold's letter of March 4 to Clough suggests that the Bhagavadgita "heavily influenced" Arnold's *Resignation* and other early poems. Clough did not like Arnold's interest in Oriental philosophy. In a review of Arnold's 1852 volume which included *Empedocles on Etna,* he quoted Arnold's poem *Morality* and was happy to find that Arnold had "for once" escaped from "The dismal cycle of his rehabilitated *Hindoo Greek Philosophy.*"[7] But the fact is that Arnold could not escape from the eastern influence as Basil Willey points out, "Arnold is a child of new era and has felt the full strength of the modern spiritual East wind."[8]

Since in the Bhagavadgita, the greatest emphasis is on duty, and Arnold's reiterated references to duty in his works seem to be the result of his constant use of the Bhagavadgita, D.J. Delaura writes :

> We know now that Arnold's interest in the *Bhagavad Gita* has been aroused by October 1845 and that it increased when he read the poem and what had been written about it. He shows his familiarity with the poem sides when early in 1848 he tries to convert to his own enthusiasm.[9]

In most of his poems there is a persistant streak of frustration

and alienation on the one hand and the obvious pleadings for dutifullness and action on the other. The first as the result of his temperamental gloominess and the other due to the impact of books like the Bhagavadgita.

From 1850 and onwards constitute the second phase of his life. Arnold was a mature man now. Between 1845 and 1846 he studied books and essays related to Indian philosophy and was able to assimilate the ideas contained therein. In 1848 he advised his friend Clough, "to try a therapautic reading of the Bhagavadgita."[10] The readings of the Bhagavadgita obviously brought about a change in his outlook towards life and it is discernible in the poems of 1849 onwards.

The most remarkable teaching of the Bhagavadgita is the doctrine of *Nishkam Karma*. It seems that Arnold uses the term 'disinterestedness' in the sense of *Anaskti* as enunciated in the Bhagavadgita. By *Anaskti* Lord Krishna in the Bhagavadgita means doing the duty without getting in it and unregardful of return and consequences.

Arnold in his poem "Resignation" writes :

> Milder natures, and more free—
> Whom an unblamed serenity
> Hath freed from Passions, and the state
> Of struggle these necessitate;
> Whom schooling of the stubborn mind
> Hath made, or birth hath found, resign'd—
> These mourn not, that their going pay
> Obedience to the passing day,
> These claim not every laughing hour
> For hand maid to their striding power;
> Each in her turn, with torch unrear'd,
> To await their march; and when appear'd,
> Through the cold gloom, with measured race,
> To usher for a destined apace
> (Her own sweet errands all forgone)
> The too imperious traveller on.[11]

These lines closely echo the idea of the following oft-quoted *sloka* of the Bhagavadgita.

> Karmany eva' dhikaraste
> ma phalesu Kadacane

ma Karmaphalahetur bhur
ma te sango' stv skarmani.

(Your authority extends only to the performance of Action; (obtaining or not obtaining) the fruit, is never within your authority (that is, never within your control); (therefore) do not be one who performs Action with the (avaricious) motive (in the mind) that a particular fruit should be obtained (of his Action); nor do you also insist on not-performing Action)[12]

The famous verse contains the essential principle of disinterestedness. In "Resignation" he further says :

Rather thyself for some aim pray
Nobler than this, to fill the day;
Rather that heart, which burns in thee,
Ask, not to amuse, but to set free;
Be passionate hopes not ill resign'd
For quiet, and a fearless mind,
And though fate grudge to thee and me
The poet's rept security,
Yet they, believe me, who await
No gifts from chance, have conquer'd fate
They, winning room to see and hear,
And to man's business not to near,
Through clouds of individual strife
Draw home ward to the general life.[13]

Almost the same idea has been expressed in the Bhagavadgita. In the Bhagavadgita Krishna lays emphasis on doing the duty without grudge and grumbling :

Yajnarthat Karmango' nyatra
loko' yam Karma bandhanah
tadartham Karma Kaunteya
muktasangah samacara.
(This world is bound by Action other than that which is performed for the 'Yajna; perform (even) the action (to be performed) for it, (that is for Yajna), abandoning the Attachment or hope of Fruit).[14]

The implication of the *sloka* is that all work is to be done in a spirit of sacrifice, for the sake of Divine. The Bhagavadgita asks us to do such action without entertaining any hope of reward. In "Resignation" Arnold has emphasized the importance of action.

For him active life is necessary to face the odds of life.

In *Stanzas in Memory of the Author of "Obermann"* Arnold indicates the ways to attaining success (Moksha) in this world. Devoted to his duty man attains perfection. He advises that a man should be true to his feeling and impulse :

> They do not ask, who pined unseen,
> Who was on action hurl'd,
> Whose one hand is, that all have been
> Unspotted by the world.
>
> There without anger wilt see
> Him who obeys thy spell
> No more, so he but rest, like thee,
> Uusoil'd!—and so, farewell.[15]

The Bhagavadgita also presents the same concept of duty. Accepting the theory of rebirth, it holds that man's inborn nature is determined by his own past actions. Every body aims at something beyond himself.

> Yatah pravrttir bhutanam
> Yana sarvam idam tatam,
> svakarmana tam abhyareya
> siddhim vindsti manavah.
>
> (When a man, (not merely by speech or flowers, but) by performing the action which befall him (according to his own religion), worships That, from which all created being have sprung, and which has pervaded or occupied the whole of this Cosmos, he (merely thereby) attains perfection).[16]

The main end of life is not the pursuit of material happiness. We are bound to miss it as we approach the end of life, with its incidents of old age, infirmity and death. For the sake of ideal, justice and love we must stand up to tyranny and face pain and death. On the very edge of the battle, Arjuna loses heart and all wordly considerations persuade him to obtain from the battle. Arjuna has still to listen to the voice of the teacher who declares that he should lead a life in which his acts will not have their root in desire, that there is such a thing as *niskama karma*—desireless action.

The distress of Arjuna and the distress of 'King' in *The Sick King of Bekhara* is a dramatization of a perpetually recurring pre-

dicament. They on the threshold of higher life, feel disappointment with the glamour of the world and yet illusions cling to them and they cherish them. They forget their divine ancestry and become attached to their personality and are agitated by the conflicting force of the world. Before they wake up to the world of spirit and accept the obligations imposed by it, they have to fight the enemies of selfishness and stupidity, and overcome the dark ignorance of their self-centered ego. It is the evolution of the human soul that is portrayed here. There are no limits of time and space to it. The fight takes place every moment in the soul of men.

The Vizire's following admonitions to king are reminiscent of Krishna's exhortations to Arjuna. The Vizir says :

> O king, in this I praise thee not !
> Now must I call thy grief not wise,
> Is he thy friend, or of thy blood,
> To find such favour in thine eyes ?
> Nay, were he thine own mother's son,
> Still, thou art king, and the law stands.
> It were not the balance swerved.
> The sword were broken in thy hands.[17]

The following words of Lord Krishna seem to have haunted the mind of Arnold at the time of writing the above quoted lines :

> Klaibyam ma sma gamah partha
> nai'tat tvayy upapadyate
> Ksudram hrdayadauvbalyam
> tyaktvo' ttistha paramtapa.
>
> (You are lamenting for those, for whom you should not lament, and yet talk about knowledge ! Knowers do not lament (whether) the dead or the not dead).[18]

In his poem *The Sick King in Bokhara*, Arnold favours even killing. But this extreme step should be for just cause, it is not improper to kill for the sake of duty and for the welfare of humanity. Here Arnold demonstrates his faith in the disposal of duty. Only through action man can attain peace in life. Mere renunciation of materialistic pleasure is not enough to get happiness, but a man should perform all the worldly deeds without any sense of attachment.

In his approach to one's duty, sometimes Arnold is very practical. In his Liverpool Address he told his students about his belief in, "*look for yourself*, never mind what other people may say; no opinion or theories can interfere with information acquired from dissection."[19]

Mathew Arnold was never disloyal to the duty of seeking truth by means of reason. It was out of intellectual sincerity that he came to accept ways of knowledge and action. If a man is loyal to his work, he leaves something for coming generations. Honest work or action alone is immortal in this world, where every one dies.

Arnold was in search of a poet-philosopher on the basis of the characteristics referred to by Carlyle in his lecture on "Hero as Poet". For such a poet-philosopher, Arnold thought of the authors of the *Book of Job* and the Bhagavadgita and Lucretius and Empedocles. During these years he read with interest the Bhagavadgita and its analysis by Wilhelm Von Humboldt in the *Transactions of the Royal Academy of Science*, Berlin (1826).[20] In In his analysis Humboldt has tried to point out the similarities between the Bhagavadgita, the *De Return Nature* and the fragments of Empedocles. H. H. Hilman, Professor of Poetry at Oxford, in a review of Humboldt's analysis in *Quarterly Review* of April 1931, says that "the *Bhagavad Gita* in its place in the *Mahabharata* reads like a noble fragment of Empedocles or Lucretius introduced into the midst of an Homeric epic."[21] Arnold read Humbdolt's review and the associations between Lucretius, Empedocles and the Bhagavadgita must have exercised a great fascination on his mind. This most probably inspired him to write a poem on Empedocles.

In *Empedoeles on Etna* Arnold follows Carlyle's teaching based on the Bhagavadgita, i.e., "Lower your denominator; don't ask too much of life, work at what is in front of you." It expresses an ideal view of life. His (Empedocles) message to Pausanias is not to despair because life provides scope for man's effort :

> What were the wise man's plan ?—
> Through this sharp, toil—set life,
> To work as best he can,
> And win what's won by strife.[22]

Empedocles' discontent is due to his lost touch with the new age,

he makes his exist violently but with utmost joy. Empedocles appreciates the path of work, action, success, but feels the attraction of the contemplative life.

For Arnold, the idea of duty gave hope and certitude. Self-sufficiency has always been recommended by the great men and sages, especially for a disorganised society. Self discipline is a way of getting on with disagreeable society. The other way is action. Sanacour also advises the same, "Take back your gifts and your chains, let (man) act, let him suffer even', let him act for this is to enjoy and to live."[23] Self assertion, energy and courage, Arnold feels, are valuable in themselves. He enjoined two duties, harmonised in one; the individual interior search for sanctions of action, and the obligation to act for the civilizing society :

> We have the truth ! they cry;
> And yet their oracle,
> Trumpet it as they will, is but the same as thine,
> Once read thy own breast right
> And thou hast done with fears;
> Man gets no other light,
> Search he a thousand years,
> Sink in thyself ! there ask what ails thee, at that shrine ![24]

The intellectual frame of reference in *Empedocles in Etna* is substantially derived from the Bhagavadgita. In his voluminous biography of Arnold[25] L. Bonnerot also believes the possible influence on the Bhagavadgita on Arnold in this regard.

Empedocles' final advise to Pausanias is that he should pursue human effort without fear and without extravagent hope, without dreaming or despairing. Arnold suggests that the exacerbation of consciousness which afflicts Empedocles is the result of being born in one age and living into another. The task is urgent; for *Karma*, which signifies the inescapable consequence of our section, good and bad, accumulate in each birth. So :

> And each succeeding age in which we are born
> Will have more peril for us than the last;
> ---
> Will make ourselves harder to be discern'd.[26]

Arnold knew that men should be tempted to flee into the past instead of facing the task. But we cannot cheat ourselves with such a sham solution :

And the reality will pluck us back,
Knead us in its hot hand, and change our nature
And we shall feel our powers of effort flag,
And rally them for one last fight—and fail;
and we shall sink in the impossible strife,
And be astray for ever[27]

The poet presents a life which was sufficiently poised between the life of thought in solitude and the life of friendly connections in society to enjoy them both :

...then neither thought
Nor outward thing were closed and dead to us;
But we received the shock of mighty thoughts
On simple minds with a pure natural joy;
And if the sacred load oppress'd our brain,
We had the power to feel the pressure eased,
The brow unbound, the thoughts flow free again,
In the delightful commerce of the world,
We had not lost our balance then, nor grown
Thought's slaves, and dead to every natural joy.[28]

By death, Empedocles must have intended to preserve something else, not his poor flesh, but his fidelity, his honourable character. He would be useful to men by giving an example of a man's sacrifice. Here is a steady current of resistance, a uniform sanity of self-control in the treatment of the painful experience so subtly described :

We would have inward peace,
Yet will not look within;
We would have misery cease,
Yet will not cease from sin;
We want all pleasant ends, but will use no harsh means;
We do not what we ought,
What we ought not, we do,
And lean upon the thought
That chance will bring us through;
But our own arts, for good or ill, are mightier powers,
Yet, even when man forsakes
All sin,—is just, is pure,
Abandons all which makes
His welfare insecure,—

Other existence there are that clash with ours.[29]

In this poem, he also makes a vigorous appeal to the manliness, fortitude, and sobriety of spirit with which all disappointments and failures of the humanity ought to be met. The poet asserts that it is the part of a man of true wisdom to curb immoderate desires, to bow to the might of forces he cannot control, and while nursing no 'extravagant hope' to yield to no despair :

Streams will not curb their pride
The just man not to entomb,
Nor lightning go aside
To give his virtues room;

Nor is that wind less rough which blows a good man's barge.[30]

And after thus completely justifying his own 'sanity of soul', he finds himself unable to act as he approves and leaps into the fiery creator. Here the poet presents a firm mind without either deep shadow of despair or high lights of faith :

Mind is the spell which governs earth and heaven,
Man has a mind with which to plan his safety;
Know that, and help thyself ![31]

To be ambitious is not wrong, but to dream without any strong base is generally the cause of ruin. In this world the wise men struggle for the betterment of mankind. They struggle for the benefit of others. Empedocles also believes that wise men will teach us the truth if we approach them in a spirit of service.

As far as the question of suffering is concerned, Empedocles advises not to suffer silently. Everybody should struggle against the odds of life, and in his struggle he will find God at his side :

So, loath to suffer mute,
We, peopling the void air,
Make Gods to whom to impute
The ills we out to bear;
With God and Fate to rail at, suffering easily.[32]

The Bhagavadgita also advises to abandon all desires. A man should not look upon the things of the world as means for his satisfaction. To develop this attitude of non-attachment to things, contemplation is essential :

Vihaya kaman yah sarvan
pumas carati nihsprhah
nirmamo nirahamikarah
sa santim adhigacchati.

(He alone acquires tranquillity, who performs Action having given up all Desire (that is, all attachment) and become desireless, and who has got mine-ness and egoism.)[33]

In "Courage" which was published in 1852 the poet once again underlines the importance of the detached life. He advises that a man should control his unnecessary desires and he should move according to the laws of nature and God :

True, we must tame our rebel will;
True, we must bow to Nature's law;
Must bear in silence many in ill;
Must learn in wait, renounce, with draw.[34]

By surrender to God and nature, who preside over cosmic existence, and activity, a man is relieved from anxieties :

Mayi sarvani Karmani
samnyasya' dhyatmacetasa
nirasir nirmamo bhutva
Yudhyasva vigatajvarah.

(For this reason, O Arjuna !) making a *samnyasa'* (that is, dedication) of all Action to Me 'with a mind fixed on the Highest Self' (that is, with an *adhyatmabuddi*—trans.) and giving up Hope (for the Fruit) as also Mine-ness, fight, without any mental perturbation).[35]

Thus in the Bhagavadgita and in Arnold we find that duty determines destiny. Duty done promptly and faithfully decides every affair before us. It is one of the worst of errors to suppose that there is any other path of safety except that of duty. God always has a hand of help for those who are willing to do their duty. Duty is the divine rule of conduct which keeps us on the right path and prevents us from committing moral errors. All great men respond to the call of duty faithfully and suppress their emotions which interfere with their loyalty to it. Just as we cannot disobey the commands of God without punishment, similarly when duty is disobeyed, misery and suffering afflict us. Idea of duty keeps the world in action. It makes man fearless and loyalty to duty gives moral strength. In the Bhagavadgita Krishna tells Arjuna that one can attain perfection only while doing one's duties. Action done devotedly and whole heartedly and without attachment to the results, makes way for perfection.

In "Youth and Calm" (1852), Arnold presents a new outlook. He says if a man is contended with what he has, or he is satisfied with his state of living, it is noble. But this alone is not enough because it will create obstacles in his progress in life. It cannot be the supreme achievement in life, though for certain extent, it is a healthy sign, because when a certain part of life is crossed, then man desires calm in life, because after that there will be no further hope in life. Arnold writes :

Calm's not life's crown, though calm is well,
'Tis all perhaps which man acquire,
But 'tis not what our youth desires.[36]

Here Arnold recommends full active life for human beings. Aldous Huxley believes that Arnold accepted the post of Inspector of Schools which Lord Lansdown had procured for him in 1852, as a kind of philosophical action. He did his job and did it well, though it affected his poetic career. To be a poet in the intervals of a routine work is almost impossible. "Yet-work-routine work" says Trilling, "is one of the 'ways' of the Bhagavadgita, an alternative to contemplation and escape from despair."[37] So impressed by the *Karma* philosophy, he devoted himself to a conventional career. The influence can be seen in "The Buried Life"; the very title has a significance for others with its famous lines :

But often, in the world's most crowded streets,
But often, in the din of strife,
There rises an unspeakable desire
After the knowledge of our buried life;
A thirst to spend our fire and restless force
In tracking our true, original course;[38]

Both the action and imagery of *Sohrab and Rustam* lend support to the *Karma* philosophy of the Bhagavadgita. It is also a mandate for action. Both the father and the son were hauuted by the fierceness of action. They did not think about the result. They could not sleep for a moment. Throughout the night they kept on thinking about their duty as patriotic soldier :

He rose, and clad himself, and girt his sword,
And took his horseman's clock :...[39]

They were burning with the passion of action. They were not afraid of the dire consequences of war. Both the father and son plunged into a disastrous combat. When Sohrab is fatally stabbed by his father Rustam, he says :

'Desire not that, my father ! thou must live,
For some are born to do great deeds, and live,
As some are born to be obscured, and die,
Do thou the deeds I die too young to do,
And reap a second glory in thine age;[40]

Echoing the Bhagavadgita, Matthew Arnold sets out in *Sohrab and Rustam* that everything in this world is predestined. The human beings are simply agents to execute the plans of God. Whatever is happening and whatever will happen in future has already been determined by the Almighty God. In *Sohrab and Rustam* when the son was killed by his own father, the son says :

But it was writ in Heaven that this should be.[41]

The *Scholar Gipsy* (1853) has been variously interpreted by critics. Some think that in it the influence of the Bhagavadgita is easily traceable, while a few others disagree with this stand. However, a careful persual of this enigmatic poem convince the reader of the fact that study of this poem in the light of the idea of true renunciation as enunciated by Lord Krishna in Chapter V[42] of the Bhagavadgita will make the poem more meaningful. *The Scholar Gipsy* abandoned the usual course of life in hope of "The spark from heaven to fall". Referring to the scholar's renunciation of the common path of life, Arnold attributes imperishabily to him, because he has, "*one* aim, *one* business, *one* desire." He writes :

For early didst thou leave the world, with powers,
Fresh, undiverted to the world without,
Firm to their mark, not spent on other things;
Free from the sick fatigue, the languid doubt,
Which much to have tried, in much been baffled, brings
O life unlike to ours.
Who fluctuate idly without term or scope,
Of whom each strives, nor knows for what he strives,
And each half lives a hundred different lives;
Who wait like thee, but not, like thee, in hope.
Thou waitest for the spark from heaven'...[43]

Arnold's lines illustrate the idea of the following sloka of the Bhagavadgita :

samnyasah Karmayogas' ca
nih sreyasakarav ubhan
tayos tu Karmasamnyasat
Karmayogo visisyate.

(Karma *samnyasa* and Karma-Yoga, both these (paths or Nisthas) are *nihsreyasakara* (that is producing Release); but, (that is, though both may be of the same value from the point of view of Release,) the worth (that is, the efficacy) of Karma-Yoga, out of these two, is greater than of *Karma-Samnyasa*)[44]

In *Merope* (1858) the poet prefers good and great actions in life. Here Arnold's message was that man should undertake painful and laborious work at the command of conscience. All work should be done in a spirit of sacrifice, for the sake of the Divine. The Bhagavadgita asks us to such action without enertaining any hope of reward.

Surprisingly, the message of dutifulness in *Merope* is communicated by Arnold through Polyphontes who otherwise is a murderer. *Merope* as a drama is failure and the villain, Polyphontes (whom Arnold rather cherished), is drawn with a mechanical "understanding, a little of light and a little of dark",[45] He at many places becomes, Arnold's mouthpiece. He maintains "consistent graciousness"[46] and echoes the idea of the Bhagavadgita as assimilated by Arnold. While taking to Merope he says :

...I will believe,
Courageous, faithful actions, nobly dared.[47]

These lines closely echo the idea conveyed in the following lines of the Bhagavadgita :

tasmad asaktah satatam
Karyam Karma samacare
asakto hy acaran Karma
param apnoti pususeh.

(*tasmat*, (that is, because the *Jnanin* does not in this way set store by anything in this world), you too do not have any Attachment (to the Fruit), but perform (your) duty; because the man who performs Action, having given up Attachment, attains the highest (state).[48]

It shows that work done without attachment is marked as superior to work done in a spirit of sacrifice which is itself higher

than work done with selfish aims. While this verse says that the man reaches the Supreme, (Param), performing actions, without attachment, *Karma* helps us to attain purity of mind which leads to salvation. It takes us to perfection indirectly through the attainment of purity of mind. Justifying the murder committed by him, Polyphontes almost argues in the vein of Lord Krishna who inspires Arjuna to kill the Kaurvas. Polyphontes talking to Merope says :

> Murder !—but what is murder ? when a wretch
> For private gain or hatred takes a life,
> We call it murder, crush him, brand his name,
> But when, for some great public cause, an arm
> Is, without love or hate, austerely raised
> Against a power exempt from common checks,
> Dangerous to all, to be but thus annull'd—
> Ranks any man with murder such an act ?
> With grievous deeds, perhaps; with murder, no;
> Find then such cause, the charge of murder falls—
> Be judge thyself if it abound not here.[49]

In the Bhagavadgita Krishna advises Arjuua almost identically when Arjuna seeing his friends and relatives, throws his arms. Lord Krishna gives him the advise to fight for the sake of duty, because he also thinks that if a work is done for a great cause, then it cannot be a crime. Krishna advises Arjuna :

> svadharmamapi caveksya
> na vikampitum arhasi
> dharmyadhi yuddhac chreyonyat
> ksatriyasya na vidyate
>
> (Besides, even if you consider your own duty, you ought not to falter (on this occasion); because, there is nothing more meritorious to a ksatriya than warfare enjoined by duty.)[50]

In *A Southern Night* (1861), Arnold believes that beauty of life consists in performing the duty. He was deeply touched by the personality of Indian sages who unregardful of anything performed their duties. He finds dutiful Indian sages very near to God. They can attain deliverance by their devotion to God. They also serve mankind without expecting any reward ;

And the pure goal of being reach;
Hoar-headed, wrinkled, clad in white,
Without companion, without speech,
By day and night
Pondering God's mysteries untold,
And tranquil as the glacier-snows
He by those Indian mountains old
Might well repose.[51]

The Bhagavadgita says :

Yah servatra' nabhismehar
tat—tat prapya a ubhasubham
na' bhinandati na dvesti
tasya prajna pratisthita.
(His reason is (said to be) steady whose Mind is without attachment in all things, and who feels no exultation or aversion about the agreeable or disagreeeable which befalls him.)[52]

Arnold's firm faith in duty becomes the central theme in *Obermann Once More.* In the poem he says that man should devote himself to duty :

Unduped of fancy, henceforth man
Must labour :—must resign,
His all too human creeds, and scan
Simply the way divine.[53]

Thus we notice that the central teaching of the Bhagavadgita aims at mans's freedom through duty (*Karma*). The purification of heart which is essential for one's *moksha*,s eems to be the key, note of Krishna's teaching to Arjuna. The Bhagavadgita advocates detachment from desires. A man may do the painful works, but it should be done in a way, so that one attain perfection even while doing one's duty. If man acts in the light of the Bhagavadgita with detachment, dedication and love even in relation to enemy, he can improve the matters. J. W. Haver states about the central message of the Bhagavadgita in these words : "we are not called to solve the meaning of life but to find out the deed demanded of us and to work and so, by action to master the riddle of life.[54]

This is the crux of many poems of Arnold. Himself torn by dimetrically opposite pulls, Arnold seems to have found solution to his spiritual crisis in the message of dutifulness

as given by Lord Krishna in the Bhagavadgita. This naturally changed the tone of many of his poems and became their central theme. In many respects Arnold in life resembles Arjuna sitting in despair in his charriot in the midst of two armies before salvaged by Lord Krishna.

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THE INFLUENCE OF THE GITA ON THE POETRY OF SWAMI VIVEKANANDA AND SWAMI RAMA TIRTHA

I

The Bhagavadgita, which has been "recognised as one of the world's spiritual classics and guide to all on the path of Truth",[1] is one of the greatest devotional books in world literature. It forms part of the Bhishma Parvam of the *Mahabharta,* one of the two celebrated epics of India. It is a subdivision of the Bhishma Parvam, which is known as the Bhagavadgita Parvam which consists of thirty chapters including the eighteen chapters of the Gita. It is an aesthetic and poetical summation of "the most spiritual phases of Brahmanical teaching" expressed "in language of such depth and sublimity, that it has become deservedly known as the Bhagavadgita or Divine song."[2] Wilkins translates it as the *Divine Lay* and Edwin Arnold renders it into beautiful English as *Song Celestial.*

Indeed, the Bhagavadgita is a valuable aid to understand the supreme ends of life and to solve the tangled web of the riddle of existence. J. W. Hauer rightly calls it "a work of imperishable importance", which gives us the great massage :

> We are not called to solve the meaning of life but to find out the Deed demanded of us and to work and so, by action, master the riddle of life.[3]

It is not a philosophical and esoteric treatise designed for and understood by the pedants and the specially initiated but a popular "religious classic"[4] which has been inspiring the erring mortals to follow the path of just, virtuous and righteous conduct and to accomplish only wise and benevolent actions. Commenting

on its universal significance and catholicity of appeal Dr. Radhakrishnan says :

> It represents not any sect of Hinduism but Hinduism as a whole, not merely Hinduism but religion as such, in its universality, without limit of time or space, embracing within its synthesis the whole gamut of the human spirit, from the crude fetishism of the savage to the creative affirmations of the saint. The suggestions set forth in the Gita about the meaning and value of existence, the sense of the eternal values and the way in which the ultimate mysteries are illumined by the light of reason and moral intuition provide the basis for agreement in mind and spirit so very essential for keeping together the world which has become materially one by the universal acceptance of the externals of civilization.[5]

Since it contains the quintessence of "Vedic knowledge", it is known as *Gitopanisad*.[6] It bears close resemblance with the *Upanishads* and like them it is "a non-systematic work."[7] Gita is a beautiful and poetic presentation of Vedantic synthesis and a unique revelation of the spiritual experiences of great seers and sages. It is a valuable and imperishable possession of mankind. Sri Aurobindo says :

> The Gita is not a weapon for dialectical warfare; it is a gate opening on the whole world of spiritual truth and experience and the view it gives us embraces all the provinces of that supreme region. It maps out, but it does not cut up or build walls or hedges to confine our vision.[8]

Gita, which dates back to the fifth century B. C.; has exercised great and lasting influence on human thought, conduct, philosophy, literature and poetry all over the world. Both its subject matter and style and versification have inspired not only Indian writers and poets but also English and American writers. The great English romantic poets—William Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge and Shelley; the great Victorian writers and poets—Tennyson, Arnold, Carlyle and Ruskin;[9] the American ranscen dentalists—Emerson, Thoreau, Walt Whitman[10] and many others have been greatly influenced by the Gita. The luminaries in Indian English literature—Swami Vivekananda, Swami Ram Tirtha, Sri Aurobindo, Purohit

Swami, Paramhans Yogananda, Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi[11] attained unscalable spiritual heights both in their life and writings due to the immense influence of the Gita. Their writings are suffused with the Vedantic philosophy of Gita. Commenting on its influence Sri Aurobindo says :

> Its influence is not merely philosophic or academic but immediate and living, an influence both for thought and action, and its ideas are actually at work as a powerful shaping factor in the revival and renewal of a nation and a culture....Outside India too it is universally acknowledged as one of the world's great scriptures, although in Europe its thought is better understood than its secret of spiritual practice.[12]

This paper aims at tracing the influence of the Gita on the English poetry of Swami Vivekananda (1863-1902) and Swami Rama Tirtha (1873-1906), who composed sweet and beautiful lyrics in moments of ecstasy. Both the subject matter and the style of this sacred book left ineffaceable influence on their poetry. We should discuss the content and message of the Gita in order to assess its influence on the poetry of two saint-poets—Vivekananda and Rama Tirtha.

The purpose of Gita is to deliver mankind from the nescience of material existence. In anxiety and sorrow ridden material life every one is confused and bewildered, and does not know how to solve the puzzle of existence, as Arjuna was in a fix in having to fight the Battle of Kurukshetra. Arjuna surrendered unto Lord Krsna, and consequently to redeem him from evanescent material existence and to transport him into eternal existence the Lord gave the imperishable message of the Gita which is one of the earliest manifestations of existentialism in the world. Our existence is eternal but due to ignorance (*asat*) we do not comprehend the Supreme Reality (*sat*). Arjuna, who stands for all suffering and doubting human beings, inquires about his awkward position, questions his doubts and sufferings and wants a solution to all of them. He wants a practical solution, to the very riddle of existence itself. Lord Krsna gives a rational explanation of all doubts, problems and questions of Arjuna, who hesitates to perform his duty. The Lord convinces him about the real purpose of life, which is to perform desireless action. Gita reestablishes the real purpose of life when man forgets that purpose.

The subject of the Gita entails the comprehension of five fundamental truths. First, the science of God is lucidly, convincingly and logically explained and then the constitutional position of living entities (*jivas*). God (*isvara*), who is the Supreme Controller, controls the entire existence of living entities, who own both their origin and extinction to Him. Material nature (*prakrti*) and time are also discussed in detail. Gita emphasises on the Supreme who creates the perceptible world by His nature (*prakrti*). The Lord says :

> The eternal cosmos is My Womb, in which I plant the seed,
> From which all beings are born, O Prince;
> O illustrious son of Kunti : through whatever wombs men
> are born, it is the Spirit Itself that conceives, and I am their Father.[13]

He is responsible for the creation, preservation and dissolution of the universe. He is the source and sustainer of eternal values. He resides in the heart of every being;

> God dwells in the hearts of all beings, O Arjuna : He causes them to revolve as it were on a wheel by his mystic power.[14]

He stirs our hearts to devotion and grants our prayers :

> But whatever the form of worship, if the devotee have faith,
> Then upon his faith in that worship do I set My own seal.
> If he worships one form alone with real faith, then shall his
> desires be fulfilled through that only; for thus have I ordained.[15]

He is the enjoyer and lord of all sacrifices :

> I am the willing recepient of sacrifice, and I am its true Lord.
> But these do not know Me in truth and so they sink back.[16]

God, who is the only abiding reality, is "the supracosmic; eternal, spaceless, timeless Brahman who supports this cosmic manifestation in space and time."[17]

Matter and spirit are the two eternal principles in the Gita. The Divine Form (purusa) and matter (prakrti) belong to one spiritual whole but the latter is the source of all change. It creates the illusion of reality (*maya*). Man owes his powers, deeds to three qualities or moods (the three gunas—*Satva* (purity), *rajas* (passion) and *tamas* (ignorance) created by nature.[18] The wise ones who transcend these qualities, which are the real cause of physical existence, are freed from birth and death, from old age and misery, and enjoy the nectar of immortality. Those who perform desireless action, cultivate an attitude of equipoise and indifference, transcend the three Qualities and serve the Eternal with unfaltering devotion and become One with Him :

> For I am the home of the spirit, the continual source of immortality, of Eternal Righteousness and infinite Joy.[19]

The wise one sees behind the veil of *maya* which is God's creative power and which is the source of delusion (*moha*). Man can attain the Supreme by the observance and practice of *yoga* which means binding, balancing and harnessing of our energies and psychic powers with intense concentration with a view to attain transcendence and oneness with the Eternal. The Gita expounds a comprehensive and flexible system of *yoga-sastra* which comprises the way of knowledge (*Jnana yoga*), the way of devotion (*bhakti yoga*) and the way of action (*Karama yoga*).

Not only the subject matter but the style and versification of the Gita have also influenced the poetry of Vivekananda and Rama Tirtha. The Gita is a collection of verses of a very high order of poetry. The sublimity of its thoughts and feelings illumines and sublimates the readers. What Sri Aurobindo said about poetry in general is applicable to the majestic poetry of the Gita :

> It expresses not only the life-soul of man as did the primitive world, not only the ideas of his intelligence for which speech now usually serves, but the experience, the vision, as we may say, of the higher and wider soul in

> him. Making them real to our life-soul as well as present to our intellect, it opens to us by the word the doors of the spirit.[20]

The style of the Gita is quite archaic in its simplicity and is conspicuous for the minimum use of compounds. The images and symbols are drawn from the inexhaustible treasure of nature and are deftly employed to communicate deep spiritual vision in a concrete and picturesque manner. There is no ambiguity in its style and expression. Even the most conplicated aspects of *yoga* are enunciated in a simple, clear, lucid and aphoristic style for the benefit of common man. In the following verse the "War Chariot" and "white horses" are conspicuous for their symbolic significance :

> Then seated in their spacious war chariot, yoked with white horses,
> Lord Sri Krishna and Arjuna sounded their divine shells.[21]

"Milk white horses "drawing Arjun's chariot symbolise goodness which will come out triumphant in the battle between righteousness and evil. These symbols are also related with human psychology. Dr. Radha Krishnan's interpretation of these symbols is illuminating :

> Throughout the Hindu and Buddhist literatures, the chariot stands for the psychological vehicle. The steeds are the senses, the reins their controls, but the charioteer, the guide is the spirit of real self, atman. Krsna, the charioteer, is the spirit in us.[22]

The heart of the sons of Dhritarashtra is terror stricken as the Pandavas blow their conches.[23] Kauravas, who embody various manifestations of evil, are confused and bewildered because in the battle of righteousness, which is being fought for the protection of justice and the suppression of lawless violence, the decadent established social order founded on injustice, iniquity, disorganisation, decollation, decodation, and the unmerited exploitation of the good and virtuous, will be torn asunder; and they, the upholders of the defunct and bankrupt order will be eliminated from the social scene. They are haunted by the psychic fear.

The battle of Kurukshetra is symbolic of change from old to new, from evil to virtue, from injustice to justice.

The similes and metaphors in Gita are conspicuous for their aptness, vividty and suggestiveness. For example :

> As man discards his threadbare robes and puts on new,
> So the spirit throws off its worn out bodies and takes fresh ones.[24]

> As a ship at sea is tossed by the tempest, so the reason is carried away by the mind when preyed upon by the straying senses.[25]

How graphically and picturesquely the omnipresence of God is described :

> O Arjuna ! There is nothing higher than He; all is strung upon me as rows of pearls upon a thread.[26]

All beings merge in God. Mark the aptness, suggestiveness and concretness of the following similes :

> As rivers in flood surge furiously to the ocean, so these heroes, the greatest among men, fling themselves into Thy flaming mouths.
> As moths fly impetuously to the flame only to be killed, so these men rush into Thy mouths to court their own destruction.[27]

The stanzas in the Gita "conform to the metrical schemes as laid down by the writers on prosody"[28] and hence they possess musical quality and can be chanted. Only a few verses which cannot be so conformed cannot be chanted in a regular way.

II

The soul stirring and elevating lyrics of Swami Vivekananda and Swami Ramthirtha have been greatly influenced by the subject matter and style and versification of the Gita. It has provided them with many of their concepts, images and symbols. They were illustrious saints and thinkers of modern India, who have left an indelible stamp upon the thoughts and ideas of the human race. Endowed with unique imagination and divine wisdom (*Jana*, which has been described as an extraordinary human quality in the Gita), they pried deeper and deeper into the reality

underlying the visible and fleeting phenomenon. They enunciated the message of practical Vedanta, which is beautifully elucidated in the Bhagavadgita. Their poems are words of infinite spiritual passion and are pregnant with the precious pearls of wisdom. Indeed, Vivekananda and Rama Tirtha are two great mystic poets in Indian English literature.

Both Vivekananda and Ram Tirtha were poet-monks, philosopher-saints, self-intoxicated *sanyasis* and the illustrious builders of modern Indian thought. Their numerous lyrics and songs belong to the tradition of saint poetry, which dates back to the Vedic age. In spite of their sainthood, they were great artists with sharp aesthetic sense. A critic has rightly said :

> A saint is sometimes an artist as much. Belonging as his thoughts do to a higher plane, the aesthetic sense of saint and seer is spontaneously developed, and that sense may be expressed through various channels. So we find that some of the saints were great musicians, some were great poets and so on. Mirabai, Kabir, Dadu, Tulsidas and Nanak are no less known for the expression of their devout thoughts in exquisite poetry than for their sainthood. Shankracharaya wrote some hymns which belong to the treasure of Sanskrit literature.[29]

In this very spirit Vivekananda and Rama Tirtha too composed excellent lyrics which have an abiding place in Indian English literature. They composed their poems in a high ecstatic state, in "blessed and serene mood" when they were laid asleep in body and became a living soul. In moments of divine ecstasy and bliss they felt a presence, the presence of the Eternal, which sublimated them "With the joy of elevated thoughts." This is the highest state of bliss and peace, which is described in the following verses of the Gita :

> Supreme Bliss is the lot of the sage, whose mind attains Peace,
> Whose passions subside, who is without sin, and who becomes one with the Absolute.[30]

Both Vivekananda and Rama Tirtha were possessors of the Supreme knowledge "which sees the One Indestructible in all

beings, the One Indivisible in all separate lives."[31] Their poems, composed as easily and as effortlessly as birds sing, are the expression of pure thoughts and deep feelings, soaked in the radiant and imperishable wisdom of the Gita. The publisher of Swami Vivekananda's poems writes in the Preface to the First Edition of *In Search of God and Other Poems* :

> Some of the poems of Swami Vivekananda clearly indicate the high ecstatic state in which they were shaped and expressed. The poem "Samadhi" indicates beyond doubt that it is the expression of direct personal experience. No wonder that it tends to raise the mind of the reader to a very high plane and to infuse him with lofty aspirations.[32]

Narayan Swami, one of the chief disciples of Rama Tirtha, expressed similar opinion about Rama's poetry :

> The soul stirring poems of Rama, written by him in moments of deep inspiration and ecstatic joy, cannot fail to produce similar effects on the innermost, recess of the reader's heart to bring him to rapturous delight and lasting joy of Eternal Peace.[33]

The Gita eloquently elucidates the doctrine that God is eternal and all pervading, and so long as we are swayed by *Maya* and the three natural qualities we fail to realise the presence of the Supreme within us. Out of ignorance man thinks that he is the doer but when true knowledge dawns on him he sheds false ego, all delusions, all material attachments, and possesses great peace, joy and equipoise. He sees the Supreme, the One Indivisible in all the fleeting manifestations of life, in all animate and inanimate objects. The objects of the senses are a great hindrance to God, realization which is self-realization and one "who can withdraw his senses from the attraction of their objects, as the tortoise draws his limbs within his shell—take it that such a one has attained Perfection. The objects of sense turn from him who is abstemious. Even the relish for them is lost in him who has been the Truth."[34] The poems of Vivekananda and Rama Tirtha reveal pure spiritual vision and wisdom which has been clearly explained in the Gita and they aim at throwing the heart into the ocean of Joy Absolute, Bliss Absolute and Peace Absolute. In "In Search of God"

Vivekananda says that as long as he was under the spell of worldly attachments he searched for God in vain "like a child in the wildest forest lost." When the veil of *Maya*, of senses, of worldly attachments was renounced after long years of sacrifice, the poet realised the Eternal within himself and felt oneness with all animate and inanimate objects :

> In rapture all my soul was hushed,
> Entranced, enthralled in bliss.
> A flash illumined all my soul,
> The heart of my heart opened wide,
> O joy, O bliss, what do I find !
> My love, my love, you are here,
> And You are here, my love, my all !
> And I was searching Thee !
> From all eternity you were there
> Enthroned in majesty,[35]

He felt His presence in soft moon light, sunlight, radiant stars, in morning, noon, evening and night, in sea and rivers, in the songs of birds, in the laughter of innocent children, in the mother's lay and her affectionate kisses. He is in all, and all things are in him. All religions owe their existence to Him :

> Thou wert my God with prophets old;
> All creeds do come from Thee;
> The Vedas, Bible, and Koran bold
> Sing Thee in harmony.
> 'Thou art', 'Thou art' the soul of souls
> In the rushing stream of life
> 'Om Tat Sat Om'. Thou art my God.
> My love, I am Thine, I am Thine.[36]

The liberated soul or self "is the perfect saint who, taught by likeness within himself, sees the same Self everywhere, the outer be pleasureable or painful."[37] According to the Gita the free self sees his own Self in all beings, and all beings in his own Self. He experiences the fundamental unity of life underlying the phenomenal manifestations. He looks on everything with impartial eye and realises that the Supreme Self is birthless and timeless.[38] This concept of the Gita has been deftly poetized in poem after poem. In "The Song of the Free" Swami Vivekananda says that

the soul, freed from ignorance, realises the Eternal and feels complete identification with Him :

> Nor angel I, nor man nor brute,
> Nor body, mind, nor he, nor she;
> The books do stop in wonder mute
> To tell my nature—I am He
> Before the sun, the moon, the earth,
> Before the stars or comets free,
> Before e'en Time has had its birth—
> I was, I am, and I will;[39]

The deluded world, enveloped in the illusion of *Maya,* does not know Him as the Unborn and Imperishable. So Vivekananda exhorts the ignorant masses to give up false delusions and to realise the Supreme :

> From dream awake, from bonds be free;
> Be not afraid. This mystery,
> My shadow cannot frighten me,
> Know once for all that I am He ![40]

In the concluding stanza of the lyric "Misunderstood" he again says :

> That God is true, all else is nothing !
> This world's a dream
> Though true it seem.
> And only Truth is *He* the living !
> The real *me* is none but *He*
> And never never matter changing.[41]

"My Play is Done" is a brilliant exposition of the three qualities,—pure knowledge, passion and ignorance. The poet says that those who suffer from passion and ignorance run after bubble joys, the will O' the wisp of material existence. The poet yearns to renounce the lustreless lustre of the world which is "but delusion's toy." Man can attain Oneness with God only when he pierces the veil of *Maya.* Addressing God as Mother he says :

> Take me, O Mother, to those shores where strifes for ever cease;
> Beyond all sorrows, beyond tears, beyond e'en earthly bliss;

Whose glory neither sun, nor moon, nor stars that twinkle bright,
Nor flash of lightning can express. They but reflect its light.
Let never more delusive dreams veil off Thy face from me
My play is done; O Mother, break my chains and make me free ![42]

In "A Song I Sing to Thee" and "Six Stanzas on Nirvana" Swami Vivekananda reinterprets and elucidates the philosophy of the Supreme, Nature and *Maya*, which has been vividly explained in the Gita. He emphasises on pure, passionless, detached and desireless existence and he who attains it is the wise man, intoxicated with Divinity. The wise man who has become one with the Supreme thinks :

I am untouched by the senses, I am neither Mukti nor Knowable;
I am without form, without limit, beyond space, beyond time;
I am in every thing; I am the basis of the universe, everywhere am I.
I am Existence Absolute, Knowledge Absolute, Bliss Absolute—
I am He, I am He. (Shivoham, Shivoham).[43]

Rama Tirtha's poetry too is suffused with the spirituality of the Gita. How easily and effortlessly he gives poetic expression to the universal principle of oneness which the poet felt and experienced in his life in the poem "Joy" :

The rainbow colours are my attries,
My errands run like lightning fires.
All lovers I and, all sweet, hearts
I am desires, emotions I.
The smiles of rose, the pearls of dew,
The golden threads, so fresh so new,
All sun's bright rays, embalmed in sweetness,
The silvery moon, delicious neatness.[44]

This feeling of oneness dawns when one gives up all desires and

feels "Joy in the widest commonalty spread" :

> Oh brimful is my cup of joy,
> Fulfilled completely all desires.[45]

In ,'Roll on, ye suns and stars "Swami Rama Tirtha eloquently sums up the vision of God, as it has been described in the Gita :

> The motion, moved and mover I.
> No rest, no motion, mine or thine.
> No words can ever make me describe.[46]

In another poem "I am the mote in the sunbeam" the same vision of the Eternal is described from start to finish. God alone is omnipotent, omnipresent and ominiscient, and all objects of phenomenal existence are only His varied reflections. He is the leaf's low murmur, the swell of the terrible seas; the net, the fowler, the bird and its frightened cry; the mirror and the form reflected; the lover's passionate pleading and the maiden's whispered fear; the warrior and the sword; the killer and the killed; the flute and the breath of flute; the mind of man; gold's glitter, the light of the diamond and the lustre of sea pearl; the rose, the nightingale and her song; the flint, the spark, the taper and the moth that about it flies; good and evil; the deed and the deed's intent; temptation, victim, sinner, crime, pardon and punishment. God is

> What was, is, will be..., Creation's ascent and fall;
> The link, the chain of existence; beginning and end of all.[47]

Swami Rama Tirtha had realised God through self-realisation and he had practised detachment and passionlessness in his life. He was an enlightened soul. He maintained equilibrium in all conditions of life, in all contraries of existence. His famous poem "The World, The World is Naught to me" is an illuminating presentation of the principle of detachment and renunciation and is akin to Swami Vivekananda's "The Song of the Free." The liberated man does not care for body because to him the Self is the Ultimate Reality. He is indifferent to pleasure and pain, to joy and sorrow, to light and darkness, and to youth and age :

Life or death health or disease,
In me like vapours rise, play, and do cease,
The straight line of youth and the curves of age,
Are surface figures on me as a page.
Success, or failure makes no difference to me,
For I am free, I am free, I am free.[48]

God is birthless and deathless but he has countless births in the form of the varied manifestations of material existence :

I was never born; yet my births of breath
Are as many as waves on the sleepless sea.[49]

The blessed soul is the fountain head of love and joy to all :

I shall shower oceans of love
And bathe the world in joy.[50]

Self-realisation is God-realisation. So, the poet says :

Trust, trust the Self Supreme;
The restlessness of soul is due
To faith in things that seem—
The things that fleet as fog or dew.[51]

In poem after poem Rama Tirtha exhorts the ignorant masses to give up the transient pageants of power and pelf, which create hurdles in self realisation, which is the only abiding Truth :

These feeting forms
Mere morning charms !
They dawn and die—
Mayavic lies !
These things that seem
Are nothing but dreams
Of that Eternal Sun
The Changeless One.[52]

He again says in the poem "The Law of Life Eternal" :

See, in this scene of changing shows
There is a changeless One that glows
In seeming death, decay and pain,
It changes dress but comes again,
Love *That*, nor dress, love Him, nor things.[53]

Swami Rama Tirtha developed so deep a kinship with nature that he considered mountains, rivers, sun and rains, flowers, oceans, winds and earth to be "bone of bone, my blood of blood" in "Blood Relations." There is unity in diversity everywhere. Man's contact with Nature, who is the radiant manifestation of God, will enable him to understand reality. He felt a fair and abiding companionship with nature :

A fair companionship I know
In all I see and hear,
My mistress is the buxom wind,
I taste the breath of showers,
To me the whispering wind's are kind
And sweet the lips of flowers.
A Kinship closer than of blood
Holds me to all the earth.[54]

Like Wordsworth, the celebrated nature poet in English, to Swami Rama Tirtha, Nature is the sanctuary of peace and joy which are untraceable in the world :

O' what a chanm marvellous spreads;
Over every hill and dale,
Wondrous blue and green my beds
Charming every red and pale.
Glorious, glorious light in sheds
Over every storm and hail.
Beauteous, beauteous one and all
Heavenly, heavenly blessed call[55]

About Swami Rama Tirtha's vision of divinity and oneness with all I would like to quote from my monograph *Swami Rama Tirtha : The Great Mystic Poet of Modern India* :

> Endowed with an imaginative and visionary temperament he lived upon the very heights of life and saw the fleeting spectacle of the world pass before him. With the help of penetraing insight and visionary power he saw more of it than we, the purblind dwellers in the valley. He tried to tell mankind what he discovered to be the fact and he succeeded in doing so.[56]

Swami Vivekananda too felt a mystic kinship with nature in whose realm peace and joy reign Supreme :

> The moon's soft light, the stars so bright,
> The glorious orb of day,
> He shines in them; His beauty-might—
> Reflected lights are they.
> The majestic morn, the melting eve,
> The boundless billowy sea,
> In nature's beauty, songs of birds
> I see through them, It is He.[57]

Various objects of Nature proclaim God's glory in "A Song I Sing to Thee" :

> Lo The sun, the moon,
> The moving planets and the shining stars,
> Spheres of abode by myriads in the skies;
> The comet swift, the glimmering lightning flash;
> The firmament, expanded, infinite—
> These all, observant watchful eyes behold.[58]

The path of Action (Karma Yoga),[59] which is the sum and substance of the message of the Gita, has been expressed poetically in the poetry of these two great saint poets. Gita "is a call to action to meet the obligations and duties of life, but always keeping in view the spiritual background and the larger purpose of the universe. Inaction is condemned, and action and life have to be in accordance with the highest ideals of the age, for these ideals themselves may vary from age to age. The *Yugadharma*, the ideal of the particular age, has always to be kept in view."[60] Swami Vivekananda mildly rebukes his fellow countrymen to redeem themselves from sloth and inaction and to follow the time-honoured path of desireless action in "To The Awakened India" :

> Awake, arise, and dream no more !
> This is the land of dreams, where Karma
> Weaves unthreaded garlands with our thoughts,
> Of flowers sweet or noxious, and none
> Has root or stem, being born in naught, which
> The softest breath of Truth drives back to

Primal nothingness. Be bold and face
The Truth ! Be one with it ! Let visions cease,
Or, if you cannot, dream but true dreams
Which are Eternal Love and Service Free.[61]

Man can accomplish desireless action only when he renounces love of phenomenal life, wealth and power and "emotions deep and strong", and cultivates tolerence, perseverance, purity and true knowledge of self. In short, when man is free from passion and ignorance and attains purity, which have been discussed in detail in Chapter Fourteen of Gita, he is capable of desireless action. In "Angels Unawares" Swami Vivekananda points out that the wise man accomplishes selfless action. In his lyric "Peace" he enumerates the qualities of the pure :

It is joy that never spoke
And grief unfelt, profound,
Immortal life unlived,
Eternal death unmourned.
It is not joy nor sorrow,
But that which is between,
It is not night nor morrow,
But that joins them in.[62]

The heart of the pure is full of love and kindness for all. To him Love is God. To him Renunciation is God. To him Selfless Service is God :

Thy service true complete thy sacrifice,
Thy home the heart of love transcendent find;
Remembrance sweet, that kills all space and time,
Like altar roses fill thy place behind !
Thy bonds are broke, thy quest in bliss is found,
And one with That which comes as Death and Life;
Thou helpful one ! unselfish e'er on earth,
Ahead ! still help with love the world of strife.[63]

"The Song of the Sannyasin" is a brilliant summing up of renunciation and complete identification with God. One of his disciples writes about the occasion of the composition of this poem ;

> There were three of us and it seemed as if Pentecoastal fire descended and touched the Master. One afternoon, when he had been telling us of the glory of renunciation, of the joy and freedom of those of the ochre robe, he suddenly left us, and in a short time he had written his "Song of the Sannyasin", a very passion of sacrifice and renunciation.[64]

It is a spontaneous overflow of powerful spiritual feelings. The pure and detached know the Supreme truth about self :

> There is but one—the Free—the knower-Self !
> Without a name, without a form or stain,
> In Him is Maya, dreaming all this dream.
> The Witness, He appears nature, soul.
> Know thou art that, Sannyasin bold ! Say
> "Om Tat Sat Om" ![65]

"Kali, the Mother" reveals the destructive power of God in vivid picturesque terms :

> The stars are blotted out,
> The clouds are covering clouds,
> It is darkness vibrant, sonant,
> In the roaring, whirling wind
> Are the souls of a million lunatics
> Just loosed from the prison-house,
> Wrenching trees by the roots,
> Sweeping all from the path.[66]

It was composed in such a high spiritual state that it seemed indeed as if his physical frame could not bear it for long. Sister Nivedita also writes, "Writing in a fever of inspiration, he had fallen on the floor, when he had finished—as we learnt afterwards...exhausted with his own intensity."[67] K. R. S. Iyengar calls it "an apocalyptic vision of the breaking of the worlds and the Dance of Doom."[68] In Gita similar description of the dissolution of the universe is found in the following lines :

> When I see Thee, touching the Heavens, glowing with colour, with open mouth and wide open fiery eyes,

I am terrified. O my Lord ! My courage and my peace of mind desert me.
When I see Thy mouths with their fearful jaws like glowing
fires at the dissolution of creation, I lose all sense of place;
I find no rest. Be merciful, O Lord in whom this universe abides.[69]

Swami Rama Tirtha exposes all forms of human follies hidden under the veneer of civilisation in "O Civilisation" :

O Civilisation, Vagrant dream !
Respecting names and forms that seem,
Thou raisest a foolish dusk of show
Thyself in darkness does not know
You climb the hill to comb the hair,
You murder self to cherish care.[70]

In another poem "The So Called Civilised "he expresses both wonder and anguish over "the madding crowd's ignoble strife." The civilised ones are full of false affectations and conceits which bedim and befog the Ultimate Reality :

Like swollen sore with gathered head,
Bewildered hordes, befounded millions,
All at the mercy of opinions
Why majesty of Self we spurn.[71]

'The world is too much with us.' It keeps us down and away from the Life Divine. The glittering externals of life create obstacles in the path of spiritual redemption and lead poor mortals towards sin and depravity :

In clothes and coffins, homes as graves,
Ye bury self, then wail and rave
Ye spare the husk and soil the soul
To save a part you lose the whole.[72]

Swami Rama Tirtha, too, is a staunch exponent of the path of action, which he calls The Practical Vedanta. It can only be translated into practice when man realises the folly and transience underlying the world of 'eye and ear.' He is not merely a

visionary. He is an indefatigable seeker of truth and reality which are far more deeply interfused into the life of things. How precisely and succinctly he discriminates between the real and the unreal and presents the message of action, which is the core of the sublime teachings of Gita in the poem "The Practical Vedanta" :

> Pushing, marching labour and no stagnant Indolence;
> Enjoyment of work as against tedious drudgery,
> Peace of mind and no canker of suspicion,
> Organisation and no disaggreation;
> Appropriate reform and no conservative custom;
> Solid real feeling as against flowery talk;
> The poetry of facts as against speculative fiction;
> The logic of events as against authority of departed authors;
> Living realisation and no mere dead quotations
> Constitute Practical Vedanta.[73]

In this poem "Swami Rama Tirtha emerges as the emancipator of the masses from ignorance and slavery of misconceptions."[74]

Rama Tirtha was a romantic and religious poet of the highest order. C. F. Andrews writes about the wide catholicity of appeal of his poetry :

> The message of this gay spirit laughing at hardship and smiling at pain is that sad India sorely needs amidst the despondency of so much of her present modern life.... His romantic love of the nature, strong in his life as in his death, his passion for sacrifice and renunciation, his eager thirst for reality and Self abandonment in search of Truth, his joy and laughter of the soul in the Victory he had won—all these and other qualities such as these make him break into song, reveal the true poet behind the philosopher."[75]

His swan song "O Death" is a powerful expression in poetic prose of romanticism and the realisation of oneness with all in the religious poetry of the world :

> O Death ! Certainly blow up this body. I have enough bodies to use. I can wear these divine silver threads,

> the beams of the moon and live. I can roam as divine minstrel, in the guise of hilly streams and mountain brooks. I can dance in the waves of the sea. I am the breeze that proudly walks and I am the wind inebriated. All the shapes af mine are wandering shapes of change. I came down from yonder hills, raised the dead, awakened the sleeping, unveiled the fair faces of some and wiped the tears of some weeping ones. The nightingale and the rose both I saw and comforted them. I touched this, touched that, I doff my hat and off I am. Here I go, and there I go, none can find me.[76]

The poet ardently believes in the doctrine of the immortality of soul, which finds a conspicuous place in the Gita.

The raciness, simplicity and spontaneity of the style, language and versification of the Gita, which have been discussed in the first part of the paper, also influenced the language and style of Vivekananda and Rama Tirtha. They were so much soaked in the philosophy of the Gita that they caught not only its spirit but also the subtleties of its style and diction. Like the Gita they too ransacked the treasure of nature for apt symbols, images, similes and metaphors.

Vivekananda compares the man who vainly searches God, who dwells in his own heart, in the wilderness of faiths and creeds to "Child in the wildest forest lost..' Flash, light, sun, taper etc. are used for the radiant light of knowledge which dispels the darkness of ignorance according to the Gita.[77] Swami Vivekananda uses there symbols for the light of knowledge. When "a flash" illumines all his soul, darkness of ignorance vanishes and he realises the presence of God in him and in the multitudinous objects of the phenomenal existence. The light symbol has been aptly used in "The Song of the Free" :

> The flame stirred up doth blaze
> ... ...
> ... ...
> The cloud puts forth its deluge strength
> When lightning cleaves its breast,
> When the soul is stirred to its in most depth
> Great ones unfold their best ![78]

The poet prays to God to "Open the gates of light" to illumine the dark and dreary path of "the struggling, crying, laughing throng" in "My Play is Done." The radiance of the Divine is hidden behind the veil of *Maya*, the allurements and temptations of physical existence, as the sun is hidden behind the clouds :

> If the sun by the cloud is hidden a bit,
> If the welkin shows but gloom,
> Still hold on yet a while, brave heart,
> The Victory is sure to come.[79]

Light also symbolises hope and redemption from the darnkness of phenomenal existence. In "Angels Unawares" the poet says that man "wends on his way through dark and dismal paths" of pleasure and pain, life and death but when he understands the hollowness of name, fame and pelf "a faint but beautiful ray of light" descends to him. God is the most radiant Light and He alone illumines all :

> Lo ! the sun, the moon,
> The moving planets and the shining stars,
> Spheres of abode by myriads in the skies;
> The comet swift, the glimmering lightning flash;
> The firmament, expanded, infinite—
> These all, observant watchful eyes behold.[80]

The extinguishing light in "Kali the Mother" is symbolic of destruction and dissolution of the world.[81]

Water and its various synonyms "river", "sea", "ocean", "stream" etc. are used for the fleeting and ever changing aspects of material existence. For example: God is the Soul of Souls "in the rushing stream of life", "Ever rising, ever falling with the waves of time, still rolling on I go/From fleeting scene to scene ephemeral, with life's currents ebb and flow,"; the earth is "a floating bubble", the world is "seething, surging sea of passions strong and sorrows deep." Rolling water symbolises the limitless freedom of the seer. For example : "Like rolling river free/Thou ever be, Sannyasin bold." 'Dream' and 'darkness' stand for ignorance and delusions. Cup in the lyric "Cup" is full of the "dark drink" of miseries and sorrows. Flowers are symbolic of joy. Violet in "To An Early Violet" is a beautiful symbol for renunciation and sacrifice.

His command over English is flawless. His poetic style is characterised by simplicity, gracefulness, picturesqueness, concreteness, spontaneity, harmony and musical flow of verse.

In the poems of Rama Tirtha also the light symbol has been deftly used for spiritual knowledge, self illumination and God. Darkness stands for sheer ignorance. The 'errands' of the Divine 'run like lightning fires'. God illumines all without any discrimination :

> The sun lights the gardens as well as the waste,
> Alike I do light all changes of fate.

In "Hallelujah" the poet says that spiritual light alone dispels the gloom of ignorance :

> As the golden lance
> Of the sun's sharp glance,
> I pierce the heart of flowers
> As the silvery ray
> Of the full moon gay.
> I hook up the sea to my bowers.[82]

In "Immortal Eternity" the poet says that anxieties, doubts, fears, temptations, dangers and weaknesses "are dispelled and driven out like the dark/Of thousand years when light appears."[83] The entire cosmos has been created from a fragment of Eternal Light. The illumined soul pierces through darkness and everything becomes transparent to it. To create fine poetical effects Swami Rama Tirtha employs modern scientific symbols for light in the following lines :

> With a wondrous Chemistry, with a strange electricity
> A purifying process, a disengaging analysis,
> From loves and hatred, concerns, attachment, clingings.
> Repulsions, from the ore of passions
> Brought out of my heart, a Radium of glory—
> ... ...
> ... ...

From my radium of heart
X Rays do start
To the objects of all sorts
Transparency impart
On all sides and parts.[84]

In the lines quoted above the poet poetically sums up the philosophy of spiritual evolution which man can reach after the renunciation of worldly activities. Flowers, birds, river, sea etc. have been symbolically used to communicate the feeling of deep spiritual bliss. Dream, fetters, clouds are symbols for evanescent material attainments which fetter man's self. In the heart of a seer, who is detached, the tumultuous waves of passion are silenced and they create haunting and harmonious music in the depth of his heart :

A flood of rolling symphony
Supreme is mine.

Swami Rama Tirtha used highly expressive similes as "the yellow grass waves as golden hair of the sage", "my births of breath are as many as waves of the sleepless sea", "peace like a river flows to me" etc. We also find a quick succession of beautiful and high illustrative similes as we do in Shelley's poetry. For example :

Peace like a river flows to me,
Peace as an ocean rolls in me
Peace like the Ganges flows,
It flows from all my hair and toes.[85]

His diction is apt and suggestive. Both Vivekananda and Rama Tirtha have deftly and skilfully nativized English to express the Indian cultural and spiritual ethos. Simple and common words, with suggestive, picturesque and concrete quality, create an atmosphere of holiness which runs through the Gita and the *Upanishads* in their poetry. Rama Tirtha even transliterates the very vocabulary of the Gita, as in the following lines :

I am the Origin and end
Of all this changeful Universe,
There is, Oh mankind, naught beyond,

For all is strung on me alone
As are the beads upon the thread.[86]

How artistically Rama Tirtha uses oxymoron to describe the nature of God in the following lines :

The soundless sound, the flameless light
The darkness dark and wingless flight
Mindless thought, the eyeless sight
The mouthless talk, the handless grasp so tight
Am I, am I, am I.[87]

Some Indian words like *Maya*, prkrti, Om Tat Sat, Om,[88] etc. which reveal the real spirit of ancient Indian thought and the philosophy of Gita, have been frequently used by Vivekananda and Rama Tirtha.

The poetry of Swami Vivekananda and Swami Rama Tirtha is the apex of their religious and spiritual experiences. It is redolent of the mystical and transcendental poetry of the Gita and the *Upanishadas*. Their poetry is the consecration of the common place and is remarkable for the sincere expressiveness of the self. They felt oneness with all animate and inanimate objects of the world. The one alone is the Ultimate Reality which ever is the same. Like all poets who are "the unacknowledged legislators of the universe", the two Swamis present before the world a spiritual vision of life which clears our blurred sights and raises our minds to a very high plane and infuses us with lofty aspirations. Their poetry gives us a glimpse of inner joy of one who has cut asunder the bondage of *Maya* and has attained to "liberation in life", which has been elucidated in the Gita. The sublime poems of Vivekananda and Rama Tirtha present a lofty message—the message of detached and desireless action—for man, caught in the toils of political, social, moral and spiritual crisis.

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3. Quoted from S. Radha Krishna : *The Bhagavadgita* (New Delhi, Blackie and Son Ltd., 1977, First published in 1948) p. 12.

4. Ibid. p. 12.

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6. A. C. Bhakti Vedanta Swami Prabhupada : *Bhagavadgita As It Is* (N. Y., Collier Books) Introduction, p. 3.

7. Kashinath Trimbak Telang : *The Sacred Books of the East*, Vol. VIII. p. 13.

8. Sri Aurobindo : *Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library* Vol. 13, *Essays on the Gita*, (Pondicherry, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1972) p. 6.

9. William Blake's *Pickering-Manuscript Poems* were influenced by Charles Wilkins' translation of the *Bhagavadgita : Dialogue of Krishna and Arjun*. Wordsworth's nature poetry—*The Prelude, Tintern Abbey, Ode on the Intimations of Immortality* etc. are permeated with pantheism, the principle of unity in diversity, immortality of soul, importance of simplicity, austerity and renunciation; Coleridge acknowledges the influence of the *Gita* and the *Institutes of* the *Hindu Law* (Munir Ahmed : "Coleridge and The Brahman Creed", *The Journal of English Studies* Vol. I, No. 1, 1960, pp. 18 to 35). Shelley's *Adonais* and other poems glorify the Gita doctrine of oneness with God. Tennyson sings of the immortality of soul and unification with the Eternal in "In Memoriam", "The Ancient Sage" and "Crossing the Bar", in "St. Agnes" he glorifies renunciation of self, and in "Sir Galhad" he sings of saintly consecration. Arnold evinces the influence of *Gita* on "Thyrsis", "Rugby Chapel" and *Dover Beach*; Carlyle highlights the ideal of renunciatton in *Sartor Resartus*. Ruskin reveals influence of the *Gita* in *Unto This Last* and other works.

10. "Indian Thought in Emerson. Thoreau and Whitman", *American Literature of the Nineteenth Century : An Anthology*—(New Delhi. Asia Publishing House, 1965) pp. 33-38. *The Complete Works of Ralph Waldo Emerson*, (ed. Robert N. Linscott) (N. Y., Modern Library. 1960); *The Writings of Henry David Thoreou*, 20 Vols., (Boston, Houghton Mifflin, 1906); *Complete Poetry and Prose of Walt Whitman* (N. Y., Pellegrinic and Cudhay, 1948).

11. Mahatma Gandhi's life and thinking were moulded by the *Gita*. He writes in *Young India* (1925, pp. 1078-1079) : "I find a solace in the *Bhagavadgita* that I even miss in the Sermon on the Mount. When disappointment stares me in the face and all alone I see not one ray of light, I go back to the *Bhagavadgita*. I find a verse here and a verse there and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming tragedies—and my life has been full of external tragedies – and if they kave left no visible, no indelible scar on me, I owe it all to the teachings of the *Bhagavadgita*". In *The Story of My Experiments With Truth* Gandhiji writes : ".....to me *Gita* became an infallible guide of conduct. It became my dictionary of daily reference." (p. 198).

12. Sri Aurobindo : *Essays on the Gita*, pp. 543-44.
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15. Ibid. VII, 21 & 22.
16. Ibid. IX, 24.
17. Radha Krishnan : *The Bhagavadgita*, p. 27.
18. *The Bhagavadgita*, XIV, 5-20.
19. Ibid. XIV, 27.
20. Sri Aurobindo : *Sri Aurobindo Birth Centenary Library*, Vol. 9, *The Future Poetry* (Pondicherry, Sri Aurobindo Ashram, 1972) p. 13.
21. *The Bhagavadgita*, I, 14, p. 7.
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24. Ibid. II, 22, p. 17.
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37. *The Bhagavadgita*, VI, 32, p. 64.
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76. *The Bhagavadgita* : III 37, 38; IV 15; V 16, VI 19; VII 8; X 21; XI 17 25, 29, 39; XIV 11; XV 14.
78. *In Search of God and Other Poems*, p. 6.
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83. Ibid. p. 153.
84. Ibid. pp. 123-24.
85. Ibid. p. 66.
86. Ibid. p. 120. Lord Krishna says in the *Gita* : "It is the womb of all being; for I am He by Whom the worlds were created and shall be dissolved.

O Arjun there is nothing higher than me; all is strung upon Me as rows of pearls upon a thread." Chapter VII, 6 & 7.

87. Ibid. pp. 79-80.

88. *Om Tat Sat* : It is the synonym of God. It has been explained in detail in the last six verses in Chapter XVII in *The Bhagavadgita.*

Susheel Kumar Sharma

THE BHAGAVDGITA AND W. B. YEATS' POETRY : A STUDY IN INFLUENCE

> There is no more absorbing story than that of the discovery and interpretation of India by Western consciousness. I refer above all to the various cultural adventures inspired by the growing revelation of Indian languages, myths, and philosophies....The discovery of India is still in progress and nothing entitles us to suppose that it is nearing its end. It will not be accomplished until the day the creative force of the West shall have run irremediably dry.
>
> —Mircea Eliade in Foreword to *Yoga : Immortality and Freedom* (Bollingan series LVI, Princeton, 1969).

W. B. Yeats' first spiritual encounter with Indian philosophy and scriptures took place at the young age of twenty-two. He met at Dublin a young preacher Mohini Chatterjee who was carrying a copy of Walter Pater's *Marius the Epicurean.* Yeats was under Pater's influence at that time. This was the phase when the poet wanted to escape to the "lake isle of Innisfree." This might be one of the factors to bring them closer. Though Mohini had imbibed the philosophy of Shankara yet he was preaching theosophy. It was Mohini who introduced Yeats to Vedanta,[1] the Bhagavadgita and its theory of re-incarnation. Mohini had not only translated Shankar's *Vivek Chudamani* but also the Bhagavad-

gita into English. It may be pointed out that the Bhagavadgita does not propound any philosphy of its own but has incorporated all the philosophies prevalent at that time.[2] Thus came Yeats into contact with Indian philosophy and scriptures. Mohini Chatterjee had a lasting influence on Yeats who acknowledged it in a poem composed by him (Yeats) with the same title. Since Shankara regarded this world to be full of illusion, Yeats could not reconcile himself to this philosophy for long as an artist cannot repudiate this objective world. However, Yeats' mind was replete with thoughts about Mohini and his teachings of Indian philosophy including the Bhagavadgita. Even after years of their meeting, Yeats wrote :

> It was my first meeting with a philosophy that confirmed my vague speculations and seemed at once logical and boundless. Consciousness, he (Mohini) taught, does not merely spread out its surface but has in vision and in contemplation, another motion and can change in height and depth. A handsome youngman with the typical face of Christ, he chaffed me good humouredly because he said I came at breakfast and began some question that was interrupted by the first caller, waited in silence till ten or eleven at night when the last caller had gone, and finished my question.[3]

In the meanwhile, Yeats came in close contact with Madame Blavatsky and was soon admitted to her Esotric Circle (I make this assertion on the basis of H. R. Bachchan's research p. 227 See Infra). Yeats admired Madame's passionate nature and contributed frequently to her magazine. Actually, Yeats was in search of a religion which could make him more and more creative. He also wanted his religion to de as serviceable as his Muse. It was towards this effort which made him rationalize Irish fairies and myths. Interestingly enough Yeats found Ireland to be quite close to India in mythology. "Yeats had learned this conviction" that all mythologies have a common spiritual pursuit and basis "from Madame Blavatsky's books and from the lady herself."[4] Perhaps, under such an influcnce only Yeats wrote :

> In Christianity what was philosophy in Eastern Asia became life, biography and drama. A play passes through

> the same process in being written....Was the Bhagavadgita 'scenario' from which the Gospels were made ?[5]

It may also be noted that in several meetings of the study circles (under the auspices of Theosophical Society) discussions on Indian philosophy, including the Bhagavadgita took place. Years later, Yeats jotted down his impressions of the meetings of these study circles in the following lines :

> A little body of young men hired a room in York street some dozen years ago and began to read papers on the Vedas and the Upanisadas and the Neoplatonists and no modern mystics and spiritualists. They had no scholarship and they spoke and wrote badly but they discussed great problems ardently and simply and unconventionally.[6]

These are Yeats' comments about Dublin Hermetical Society in 1885. It was this society which grew subsequently into Dublin Theosophical Society.

Rabindranath Tagore was another influence on Yeats' spiritual encounter with the east. It was Rothenstien who introduced Tagore to Yeats. The latter was captivated by the translation of *Gitanjali* done by Gurudeo himself so much so that he wrote in its preface : "I have carried the manuscript of there translations about with me for days reading it in railway trains, or on the top of omnibuses and in restaurants and I have often to close it lest some stranger would see how much it moved me."[7] It was due to Yeats' patronage that Tagore was awarded Nobel Prize on his mystical and philosophical songs of *Gitanjali*. But Yeats was soon disgusted with too much of spiritual themes[8] in Tagore's works and denounced them. The fact remains that *Gitanjali* echoes philosophical works like the *Upanisadas* and the Bhagavadgita as has been borne out by many critics and litterateurs including S. Radhakrishnan.* The sensitive and intellcctual mind of Yeats must not have been unaware of the philosophical implications of of the songs. Besides the songs of *Gitanjali* are in the Bhakti and mystic tradition of Indian poetry which deals at large with Lord Krishna and Radha. Yeats' introduction to the book shows that he was familiar with this tradition of Bengali poetry especially.[9]

**The Philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore* (London, 1918) pp. 118-119.

Last but not the least was the influence of Purohit Swami[10] whom Yeats met in 1931. This unassuming Indian mystic was in the chain of those Indian mystics who claimed their earliest Guru to be Bhagwan Dattatreya.[11] Purohit Swami's guru Bhagwan Sri Hamsa of Lawasa (Maharastra) sent kim to Europe to preach Indian philosophy. It was through Sturge Moore that he was introduced to Yeats. Purohit had a few poems, a translation of the Gita and ten principal *Upanisads* for publication. Yeats not only persuaded M/s Faber and Faber to publish Purohit's translation of the Gita (Purohit Swami dedicated the book to W. B. Yeats with the comments : "Accept this Gita, the Upanisads in essence, a humble offering on your seventieth birthday"), his autobiography *An Indian Monk*, his biography *The Holy Mountain*, and *Aphorism to Yoga* but also wrote introductions to many of them. He him self improved upon the translation of the *Ten Principal Upanisads* besides writing its introduction. His introduction to Patanjali's *Aphorisms of Yoga* (tr. Purohit Swami) and *Ten Principal Upanisadas* (tr. Purohit Swami and W. B. Yeats) are very important because the Bhagavadgita is considered to be a summary of the Upanisads[12] and has its philosophical base in the Yoga System.[13] Richard Ellman thus describes the influence of Purohit Swami on W. B. Yeats : "In the efforts which the Indian holy man makes to get rid of all that prevents the knowledge of identity between self and self, Yeats found his own image of artist who purges the inessential to get down to the bedrock of passion."[14] Yeats' association with Purohit Swami helped him not only in making his theories about the progress of the soul and civilization but also spurred him to 'Supernatural Songs' and a play like 'The Herne's Egg'. Yeats acknowledges Swami's influence in one of his letters : "I have learned a good deal from the Swami, who suddenly makes all wisdom if you ask him the right question...."[15]

Besides seeing Indian philosophy from the eyes of above mentioned personalities Yeats must have noticed Indian interest and references in William Blake whom he edited with great interest and favoured with indefatigable research. The influence of the Bhagavadgita on Blake has already been well established. However, Ernest Rhys believes, "But it was Ireland, not India, gave Yeats his poet's birthright and mystical bias."[16] But the facts are otherwise as Yeats considered India and Ireland to be

synonymous. Besides, scholars like Rhys and Jubainville brought out interesting parallels between the Irish gods and their Indian counterparts. Even Yeats himself believed that "Irish people lived in India till the battle of Boyne." Ernest Rhys' argument also does not hold good on the ground that a scholar like Yeats who was engrossed in Indian philosophy, mysticism, occultism, culture and mythology cannot remain unaffected by it. Yeats' letters and comments bear testimony to this effect. For example, Yeats writes in his commentary on *Supernatural Songs* :

> I said that for the moment I associated early Christian Ireland with India; Sri Purohit Swami, protected during his pilgrimage to a remote Himalayan Shrine, was perfected by a strange great dog that disappeared when danger was past, might have been that blessed Cellach who sang upon his death-bed of bird and beast. Bhagwan Sri Hamsa's pilgrimage to Kailas, the legendary 'Meru' and Mansarovar, suggested pilgrimages to Craagh Patrick and the Lough Derg.[17]

Even Yeats' following statement goes against Rhys' opinion : "It pleases me to fancy that when we turn towards the East, in or out of church, we are turning out of church, we are turning not less to the ancient west and north;* the one fragment of pagan Irish philosophy come down, 'the song of Amergin' seems Asiatic...."[18] That the *Upanisads* gave to Yeats not only the philosophic background and thoughts but a spur to his poetic imagination also is borne out by Yeats' confession in his letter to Dorothy Wellesley : "...I began this volume of selection (*The Oxford Book of Modern Verse*), just as I planned to spend the winter with the Indian monk, Purohit Swami, working on Upanisadas, that I might be reborn in imagination."[19] Yoga which lends itself equally to the three ways viz. knowledge, action and devotion as described in the Bhagavadgita has rightly been considered by Yeats to be "the central experience of Indian civilization, that wherein all thoughts and all emotions expect their satisfaction and rest."[20] Only a man who has studied Indian philosophy to a great length could make such a comment. Yeats' following two passages from different

*D. H. Lawrence in a letter dated January 24, 1922 wrote to Catherine Carswell : "I want to go east before I go west : to west via the east...,"

sources make it evident that the poet had been interested in Indian philosophy since long :

> Some years ago I bought the *Yoga System of Patanjali*, translated and edited by J. H. Woods. It is impeccable in scholastic eyes, even in the eyes of a famous poet and student of Sanskrit who used it as a dictionary.[21]
>
> For some forty years my friend George Russel (A. E.) has quoted me passages from some Upanishad, and for those forty years I have said to myself—some day I will find out if he knows what he is talking about....More than once I asked him the name of some translator and even bought the book, but the most eminent scholars left me incredulous. Could latinised words, hyphenated word, could polyglot phrases, sedantary distortions of unnatural English...could muddles,...represent what grass farmers sang thousands ofyears ago, what their descendants sing today ?[22]

Yeats was well versed in not only Indian philosophy but was familiar equally with the Indian epic the *Mahabharata.* He wrote : "Why is there not some authority reverently given for so strange a thing ? In what part of Ireland was it said, this saying recalling 'Mahabharata' and 'Divine Comedy' ?[23]

The following lines from 'Ribh considers Christian Love Insufficient' bear the imprint of the *Mahabharata* :

> Thought is a garment and the soul's bride
> That cannot in that trash and tinsel hide :
> Hatred of God may bring the soul to God.[24]

In the *Mahabharata* Bhishma's display of his destructive energy compelled Lord Krishna to take to arms. Bhishma's "Hatred of God" made him begin "his war on God." Ultimately it resulted in the surrender of Bhishma and Lord Krishna's own realization that he had lost self-possesion. Since the Bhagavadgita forms a part of the *Mahabharata,* the sensitive mind of Yeats must not have remained unattracted towards this lore of the epic. Actually, Yeats' quest for the 'real' made him look into the Hindu scriptures. He was disgusted with the common day affairs which came to him as routine matters. He wrote in a letter dated January 3, 1932 : "We should ascend out of common life. Out of the thoughts of

the newspapers, of the market place. of men of science, but only in so far as we can convey the normal, passionate, reasoning self, the personality as a whole." Yeats echoed the same idea in 'Vacillation VII' (*Selected Poetry*, p. 158) : "The Soul : Search out reality, leave things that seem." Arjuna was also carried away by the appearance and refused to fight with his brethren and blood relations. When Lord Krishna showed him his Divine (real) stature Arjuna realized the reality.

"The Heart : What, be a singer and lack a theme ?" Here the poet is referring to a person like Arjuna who shunned from his duty as a fighter despite being a Ksatriya.

Yeats is indicating towards *Gyan Marg* as enumerated in the Bhagavadgita when he says ia the same poem :

"The soul : Look on that fire; Salvation walks within."

Yeats' liking of action (perhaps disinterested action) is evident from the following incident cited by H. R. Bachchan in his *W. B. Yeats and Occultism*. When asked for a message to India by Prof. Bose, W. B. Yeats said, "Let 100,000 men of one side meet the other, That is my message to India insistence on antimony." Yeats was not satisfied with this only. He strode swiftly across the room, took up Sato's sword unsheathed it dramatically and shouted "conflict more conflict."[25] If we see this message of Yeats in the light of his comments[26] to a gathering of Indian journalists and students in London, we find that he was exhorting Indians to act much in the fashion of Lord Krishna's exhorting Arjuna to take to arms. Yeat's 'Kanva on Himself' (included in *The Wanderings of Oision and Other Poems*, 1889) is a verse rendering of what Mohini Chatterji told Yeats about Krishna's explanation of the 'self' when Arjuna was bewildered to see his blood-relations in the battlefield. H. R. Bachchan has dwelt on this point in his above mentioned book (pp. 44-46) in detail.

We see the impact of the philosophy of *Karma* elaborated in the Bhagavadgita at a great length in the following definition of "pure personality" given by Yeats : "The liberated soul, thus, all karma exhausted is the 'human form divine' of Blake, that Unity of Being Dante compared to a perfectly proportioned human body."[27] As for the persons whose karma has not been exhausted

i.e. majority of people, "the world is necessary to the Self, must receive the excess of its delights and in this Self all delivered selves are present."[28] We find Yeats defining art also in terms of karma in the following words : "Does not all art come, when a nature that never ceases to judge itself exhausts personal emotion in action or desire so completely that something impersonal, something that has nothing to do with action or desire, suddenly starts into its place, something which is as unforeseen, as completely organized, as the images that pass before the mind between sleep and waking ?"[29] Thus, we can safely say that it was the Bhagavadgita which provided thought material to Yeats and provoked his imagination as well.

Unlike T. S. Eliot, Yeats refused to let his faith, "circumscribed by the Christian revelation." He had "an assured belief in personal immortality."[30] Lord Krishna teaches Arjuna the same lesson when he tells him that there was no time when he was not present and there will be no time when he will not be present :

बहूनि में व्यतीतानि जन्मानि तव चार्जुन ।
तान्यहं वेद सर्वाणि न त्वं वेत्थ परंतप ॥
आजोऽपि सन्नव्ययात्मा भूतानामी श्वरोऽपि सन् ।
प्रकृतिं स्वामधिष्ठाय संभवाम्यात्ममायया ॥

(The Bhagavadgita IV : 5-6)

Yeats also felt passionately that the fact of personal immortality was of absolute and central importance. In 'A Bronze Head', Yeats wrote, "Something may linger there though all else may die." Yeats has made use of this idea in his short poem 'A Meditation in Time of War' also when he writes : "I knew that one is animate,/Mankind inanimate fantasy." (*Selected Poetry*, p. 103) Arjuna is told about the immortality of soul in the following verse :

य एमं वेत्ति हन्तारं यशचैन मन्यते हतम् ।
उभौ तौ न विजानीतो नायं हन्ति न हन्यते ॥

(The Bhagavadgita II : 19)

Yeats believed that he was in possession of detailed knowledge about the future destiny of human soul, He expounds it even in

Book III of 'A Vision.' Yeats conceived both this life and the life to come as a continuous purgatory; but it is a purgatory conceived in quite amoral terms, and having little analogy with the sacrament of penance. And it is a purgatory almost without the expectation of paradise. After re-living its earthly experiences, the soul prepares for another incarnation. Lord Krishna tells Arjuna :

वांसांसि जीर्णानि यथा विहाय
नवानि गृह्णाति नरोऽपराणि ।
तथा शरीराणि विहाय जीर्ण—
न्यन्यनि संयाति नवानि देही ॥

(The Bhagavadgita II : 22)

"If it be true", Yeats wrote in *In the Serpent's Mouth*, "that God is a circle whose centre is everywhere, the saint goes to the centre, the poet and artist to the ring where everything comes round again."[31] Yeats' considering God to be the circle having His centre everywhere is essentially an idea from the Bhagavadgita. Lord tells Arjuna :

सर्वभूतस्थितं यो मां भजत्येकत्वमास्थितः ।
सर्वथा वर्तमानोऽपि स योगी मयि वर्तते ॥ (VI : 31)
मत्तः परतरं नान्यत्किंचिज्दस्ति धनंजय ।
मयि सर्वमिदं प्रोतं सूत्रे मणिगणा इव ॥ (VII : 7)

Yeats makes use of this idea in his poem 'The Indian Upon God' a bit obtrusively. The central idea of the poem is that God is pervading everywhere which has been taken from the Bhagavadgita (XI : 12-15). Even a flower tells itself to be the reflection of God's image :

I passed a little further on and heard a lotus talk
Who made the world and ruleth it, He hangeth on a stalk
For I am in His image made, and all this tinkling tide
Is but a sliding drop of rain between his petals wide.[32]

The same idea is repeated in the poem which was written when Yeats was mature enough and more confident of his poetic powers :

I, proclaiming that there is
Among birds or beasts or men
One that is perfect or at peace
... ...
All that could run or leap or swim
Whether in wood, water or cloud,
Acclaiming, proclaiming, declaiming Him.

(*Collected Poems* p. 305)

A saint who worships the Lord disinterestedly goes to meet the Lord; nay the Lord takes his charge :

अनन्याञ्चिन्तयन्तो मां ये जनाः पर्युपासते ।
तेतां नित्याभियुक्तानां योग क्षेमं वहाम्यहम् ॥

(The Bhagavadgita IX : 22)

But those who do not worship the Lord but other gods and goddesses worship the Lord indirectly because of their ignorance and such persons fall in the cycle of birth and death. In the same category fall the poet and artist and therefore they are never able to reach the centre and remain on the periphery :

येऽप्यन्यदेवता भक्ता यजन्ते श्रद्धायान्विताः ।
तेऽपि मामेव कौन्तेय यजन्त्यविधिपूर्वकम् ॥
अहं हि सर्वयज्ञानां भोक्ता च प्रभुरेव च ।
न तु मामभिजानन्ति तत्त्वेनातश्च्यवन्ति ते ॥

(The Bhagavadgita, IX : 23, 24)

Lord Krishna used the images of tree, branches, leaves and root to describe the reality of this world :

ऊर्ध्वमूलमधः शाखमश्वत्थं प्राहुरव्ययम् ।
छन्दांसि यस्य पर्णानि यस्तं वेद स वेदवित् ॥
अधश्चोर्ध्वं प्रस्तास्तस्य शाखा
गुणप्रवृद्धा विषय प्रवालाः ।
अधश्च मूलान्यनुसंततानि
कर्मानुबन्धीनि मनुष्यलोके ॥

(The Bhagavadgita XV : 1-2)

But a person who needs to know the reality and Absolute Truth will have to cut asunder this tree :

न रूपमस्येह तथोपलभ्यते
नान्तो न चादिर्न च संप्रतिष्ठा ।
अश्वत्थमेनं सुविरूढमूल—
मसङ्गशस्त्रेण दृढेन छित्त्वा ॥
ततः पदं तत्परिमार्गितव्यं
यस्मिन्गता न निवर्तन्ति भूयः ।
तमेव चाद्यं पुरुषं प्रपद्ये
यतः प्रवृतिः प्रसृता पुराणी ॥

(The Bhagavadgita XV : 3-4)

Yeats seems to express these ideas using the same images in 'The Coming of Wisdom with Time' :

Though leaves are many, the root is one;
Through all the lying days of my youth
I swayed my leaves and flowers in the sun;
Now I may wither into the truth.

(*Selected Poetry*. p. 45)

In 'Among School Children VIII' Yeats writes :

Labour is blossoming or dancing, where
The body is not bruised to pleasure soul.

(*Selected Poetry*, p. 130)

It is an idea of the Bhagavadgita and has been echoed by William Blake in the lines : "Men are admitted into Heaven not because they have curbed their passions but because they have cultivated their understandings. The treasures of Heaven are not negations of passion, but realities of intellect, from which the passions emanate in their eternal glory."[33] This is what we may call the essence of *Gyan Marg* a philosophy propounded by Lord Krishna in the Bhagavadgita. The last line of this poem : 'How can we know the dancer from the dance ?' is very significant because a part cannot be taken for a whole ("O chestnut tree, great rooted blossomer,/Are you the leaf, the blossom or the bole" (*Selected Poetry*, p. 130). Reality is always hidden behind the veil of Maya (See infra). Certainly God also cannot be realized simply by seeing His "Manifestation" i.e. this world.

In 'Lapis Lazuli' also we find a reference to *Gyan Marg*. The lines from the poem are :

> All men having aimed at, found and lost;
> Black out; Heaven blazing into the head;
> Tragedy wrought to its uttermost.
>
> (*Selected Poetry*, p. 181)

The gaiety, which is the result of *Gyan* (Knowledge) can transform even dreadful things like the fear of tragedy into divinely beautiful things. The poem was written at the time when the clouds of the second world-war were hovering over the continent. It is in such dreadful time when there is total blackout, according to Yeats, when the mind of the hero illumines with a heavenly light. The *Gyani* (knowledgeable and enlightened person) in such times raised himself above his misfortunes and gets not only greatness but gaiety also. Blackness is the symbol of total objectivity in Yeats' theory and it is in such objectivity of the self that the soul is annihilated completely. In the Bhagavadgita Arjuna gets *Gyan* in the battlefield of Mahabharata War and he is told to annihilate his self which will give him salvation in turn :

> सर्वधर्मान्परित्यज्य मामेकं शरणं व्रज ।
> अहं त्वा सर्वपापेभ्यो मोक्षयिष्यामि मा शुचः ॥
>
> (The Bhagavadgita XVIII : 66)

The brahmin taught W. B. Yeats : "even our desire of immortality was no better than other desires."[34] This is actually one of Lord Krishna's teachings to Arjuna. The Lord tells Arjuna that desires of no type are good :

> प्रजहाति यदा कामान्सर्वान्पार्थ मनोगतान् ।
> आत्मन्येवात्मना तुष्टः स्थितप्रज्ञस्तदोच्यते ॥
>
> (The Bhagavadgita II : 55)

The same idea echoes in W. B. Yeats' poem 'The Wandering of Oisín' :

> Long thou for nothing, neither sad nor gay:
> Long thou nothing, neither night nor day;
> Not even 'I long to see thy longing over;
> To the ever-longing and mournful spirit say.[35]

Craving and desire are told to be the main factors of sorrow by Lord Krishna in the following verses (The Bhagavadgita II ; 62-64) :

ध्यायतो विषयान्पुंसः सङ्गस्तेषुयजायते ।
सङ्गात्संजायते कामः कामात्क्रोधोऽभिजायते ॥
क्रोधाद्भवति संमोहः संमोहात्स्मृतिविभ्रमः ।
स्मृतिभ्रंशाद्बुद्धिनाशोबुद्धिनाशात्प्रणश्यति ॥
रागद्वेषवियुक्तैस्तु विषयानिन्द्रियैश्चरन् ।
आत्मवश्यैर्विधेयात्मा प्रसादमधिगच्छति ॥

In the aforequoted lines Yeats has also disparaged one's inclination for craving. Yeats rejects the theory of *Karma Marg* to attain salvation. For him *Gyan Marg* is more important and valuable. And the first step towards the philosophy is to have a control over one's senses (i.e. heart). One has to become a Sthita-Prajna to become a follower of *Gyan Marg* :

The ghosts went by me with their lips apart
From death's late langour as these lines I read
On Brahma's gateway, 'They within have fed
The souls upon the ashes of the heart.[36]

Balchandra Rajan says of the last lines of 'Under Ben Bulben' ("cast a cold eye/On life, on death./Horseman pass by !") : "The dead alone can see with an objectivity that is emotionless."[37] He is not right in his assessment as these lines echo the idea of immortality of soul if viewed from the Bhagavadgita point of view. Lord Krishna tells Arjuna :

न जायते म्रियते व कदाचिन्नायं भूत्वा भविता व न भूयः ।
अजो नित्यः शाश्वतोऽयं पुराणो न हन्यते हन्यमाने शरीरे ॥
(II ; 20)

Nay it is the stage of स्थित प्रज्ञःता—

गतासूनगतासूंश्चनानुशोचन्ति पण्डिताः ॥
(The Bhagavadgita II : 11)

The personae of 'Lapis Lazuli' are also Sthita-Prajna. They stare "on all the tragic scene" from the cliff but remain unmoved by the joys and sorrows of the world. One of them plays "mournful

melodies" on his muscial instrument but not because he feels pity for the suffering humanity wrapped in "blood and mire" but because one of them asks for it. For these persons "the threefold miseries of material life exist no longer."[38] That is why "Their eyes mid many wrinkles, their eyes,/Their ancient, glittering eyes[39] ere gay" (*Selected Poetry*, p. 182).

Yeats was much fascinated by the concepts of Karma and Reincarnation of the Bhagavadgita. He wrote : "Personality is first of all the man as he has been made by his Karma; he is set in the external world because that, too, has been made by his Karma. Even though initiation was complete, his nature so gathered up into itself that he can create no new Karma, he must await the exhaustion of the old."[40] In 'Lapis Lazuli' Yeats argues for gaiety because this life is full of miseries. But what we face here is only a transitory phase. Yeats compares this world to a theatre. All of us being the tragic heroes must accept our roles and must discharge our duties disinterestedly (cf. The Bhagavadgita XI : 32-34). Hamlet, Lear, Ophelia and Cordelia do not start crying during the play because they know that their end will not be altered and the tragedy shall not be reduced at all :

All perform their tragic play,
There struts Hamlet, there is Lear
That's Ophelia that Cordelia;
Yet they, should the last scene be there,
The great stage curtain about to drop,
If worthy their prominent part in the play,
Do not break up their lines to weep

... ...

... ...

Though Hamlet rambles and Lear rages,
And all the drop-scenes drop at once
Upon a hundred thousand stages,
It cannot grow an inch or an ounce.

(*Selected Poetry*, p. 181)

Lord Krishna also exhorts Arjuna to discharge his duty only without worrying about the result :

कर्मण्येवाधिकारस्ते मा फलेषु कदाचन ।
मा कर्मफलहेतुर्भूर्मा ते संङ्गोऽस्त्वकर्मणि ॥

(The Bhagavadgita II : 47)

Actually, Yeats thought that an easterner knew how to live amidst tragedy. Therefore, it was not important for an easterner. That Yeats had this point in his mind while writing this poem is borne out by the following letter which he wrote to Dorothy Wellesley :

> 'I notice that you have much "Lapis Lazuli"', Yeats wrote to Dorothy Wellesley. "Someone" he added "has sent me a present of a great piece carved by some Chinese sculptor into a semblance of a mountain, with temple, trees, paths and an ascetic and pupil about to climb the mountain. Ascetic, pupil, hard stone, eternal theme of the sensual east. The heroic cry in the midst of despair. But no I am wrong, the east has always its solutions and therefore knows nothing of tragedy. It is we not the east that must raise the heroic cry."[41]

Lord Krishna shows Arjuna his *Virata Swarupa* and Arjuna realizes that every action and incident has been pre-ordained—all the warriors were already dead (मयैवैते निहता: पूर्वमेव, The Bhagavadgita XI : 33). Ultimately Arjuna undesrtands that his killing others is not going to heighten the tragedy anymore (The Bhagavadgita XI : 31-51).

The poet accepts that nothing material in the universe is immortal. To support his argument Yeats gives the example of several civilizations :

> On their own feet they came, or on shipboard
> Camel-back, horse-back, ass-back, mule-back,
> Old civilizations put to the sword.
> Then they and their wisdom went to rack :
>
> (*Selected Poetry*, p. 181)

Eveh a piece of art is to be destroyed one day or the other. The creator of art is not unaware of the fact; yet he creates it and feels a joy after creating it[42] :

No handiwork of Callimachus,
Who handled marble as if it were bronze
Made draperies that seemed to rise
When sea-wind swept the corner, stands
His long lamp-chimney shaped like stem
Of a slender palm, stood but a day,
All things fall and are built again,
And those that build them again are gay.

(*Selected Poetry*, p. 182)

Yeats wrote at another place, "We begin to live when we have conceived life as tragedy" and "He knows himself and all that is in him, who knows adversity." The condition of such a stage has been described by Yeats in his four line poem 'There' :

There all the barrel-hoops are knit,
There all the serpent-tails are bit,
There all the gyres converge in one,
There all the planets drop in the Sun.

(*Selected Poetry*, p. 177)

The Lord also tells Arjuna that a man who always thinks of Him is sure to achieve "the planet of the divine" (i.e. the Sun) .

अभ्यासयोगयुक्तेन चेतसा नान्यगामिना ।
परमं पुरुषं दिव्यं याति पार्थानुचिन्तयन् ।।

(The Bhagavadgita, VIII : 8)

How to survive the destructive times is the concern of 'A Prayer for my Daughter.' It may be noted that 'A Prayer for my Daughter' followed close on 'The Second Coming.' The rough beast of the latter is present in the former also. The condition/ social milieu of the new revelation is the time being *out of joint* :

Things fall apart; the centre cannot hold
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world,
The blood dimmed tide is loosed, and everywhere
The ceremony of innocence is drowned
The best lack all conviction, while the worst
Are full of passionate intensity.

(*Selected Poetry*, pp. 99-100)

There is a strikiag similarity between the above quoted lines and the bad times described by Arjuna in the Bhagavadgita (I : 38-44) :

यद्यत्येते न पश्यन्ति लोभोपहतचेतसः ।
कुलक्षयकृतं दोषं मित्रद्रोहे च पातकम् ॥
कथं न ज्ञेयमस्माभिः पापादस्मान्निवर्तितुम् ।
कुलक्षयकृतं दोषं प्रपश्यभ्दिर्जनार्दन ॥
कुलक्षये प्रणश्यन्ति कुलधर्माः सनातनाः ।
धर्मे नष्टे कुलं कृत्स्नमधर्मोऽभिभवत्युत ॥
अधर्माभिभावात्कृष्ण प्रदुष्यन्ति कुलस्त्रियः ।
स्त्रीषु दुष्टासु वार्ष्णेय जायते वर्णसंकरः ॥
संकरो नरकायैव कुलन्धानां कुलस्य च ।
पतन्ति पितरो हेष्षां लुप्तपिण्डोदक क्रियाः ॥
दोषैरेतैः कुलन्धनां वर्णसंकरकारकै ।
उत्साधन्ते जातिधर्मा कुलधर्माश्वशाश्वताः ॥
उत्सन्नकुलथर्माणां मनुष्यणां जनार्दन ।
नरकेऽनियतं वासो भवतीत्यनुशुश्रुम ॥

In the admirable sonnet 'Leda and Swan', Yeats visualizes the destruction of civilization caused by the Trojan war in the act of the Divine rape of Leda. And a prophet is needed in such an hour only when everything has gone topsy turvy : "Surely some revelation is at hand/Surely the Second coming is at hand." (*Selected Poems*, p. 100). Yeats is pointing towards the same while writing in 'A Bronze Head' :

Or else I thought her supernatural;
As though a sterner eye looked through her eye
On this foul world in its decline and fall;
On gangling stocks grown great, great stocks run dry
Ancestral pearls all pitched into a sty
Heroic reverie mocked by clown and knave
And wondered what was left for massacre to save.

(*Selected Poems*, p. 199)

The Lord incarnates Himself, so does, the Bhagavadgita (IV : 7-8) tell us, to establish order :

यदा यदा हि धर्मस्य ग्लानिर्भवति भारत ।
अभ्युत्थानमधर्मस्य तदात्मानंसृजाम्यहम् ॥
परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम ।
धर्मसंस्थानार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे ॥

But this prophet does not appear in human form as the Gita and the Bible envisage. He comes in a half beast and half human form :

...somewhere in sands of desert
A shape with lion body and head of a man
A gaze blank and pitiless as a sun,
Is moving its slow things

(*Selected Poetry*, p. 100)

Surely it is an archetype of *Narsinghavatar* who killed Hirnyakashyap and saved Prahalad to establish order.

The persona of 'A Prayer for my Daughter' is afraid because of the total disintegration, lawlessness, anarchy and finds ceremony of innocence drowned. All these problems are there because of rootlessness. Culture comes by being rooted, therefore the persona wishes his daughter to "live like some green laurel/ Rooted in one dear perpetual place". (*Selected Poetry*, p. 102) Yeats' argument is that the child can escape the violence in no other way except in the frail, beautiful manipulation of form which too shall be doomed ultimately—which survies in the custom and in ceremony. If she can be free from her opinionatedness she can be radically innocent and will be self-delighting, self-appeasing, self-affrighting and will be happy. Lord Krishna also taught Arjuna to surrender himself to Krishna and thus he shall be free from opinionatedness. This will lead him to happiness :

तेषामहं समुद्धर्ता मृत्युसंसार सागरात् ।
भवामि नचिरात्पार्थ मय्यावेशितचेतसाम् ॥
मय्येव मन आधत्स्व मयि बुद्धिं निवेशय ।
निवस्ष्यसि मय्येव अत उर्ध्वं न संशय ॥

(The Bhagavadgita XII : 7-8)

The poet feels certain that beautiful women eat some crazy

salad which develops crazy tendency in them. This in turn wrecks their own lives :

> It's certain that fine women eat
> A crazy salad with their meat
> Whereby the Horn of Plenty is undone.
>
> (*Selected Poetry*, p. 101)

The food habits of persons are also decided by their nature viz, Sat, Rajas and Tamas which have been elaborated at a great length in the Bhagavadgita :

> आयु: सत्वबलारोग्य सुख प्रीतिविवर्धना: ।
> रस्या: स्निगधा: स्थिरा हृधा आहारा: सात्विकप्रिया: ॥
> कट्वम्ललवणात्युष्णतीक्ष्णरूक्षविदाहिन: ।
> आहारा राजसस्येष्टा दु:खशोकामयप्रदा: ॥
> यातयामं गतरसं पूति पर्युषितं च यत् ।
> उच्छिष्टमपि चामेध्यं भोजनं तामसप्रियम् ॥
>
> (The Bhagavadgita XVII : 8-10)

The Bhagavadgita teaches us that the knowledgeable seek in self :

> न हि ज्ञानेन सदृशं पवित्रमिह विद्यते ।
> तत्स्वयं योगसंसिद्ध: कालेनात्मनि विन्दति ॥
> श्रद्धावांल्लभते ज्ञानं तत्पर: संयतेन्द्रिय: ।
> ज्ञानं लब्ध्वा परां शान्तिमचिरेणाधिगच्छति ॥
>
> (The Bhagavadgita IV : 38-39)

Yeats considers the person who seeks in self to be beautiful. It is borne out by the following lines of the poem under reference :

> In courtsey I'd have her chiefly learned;
> Hearts are not had as a gift but hearts are earned
> By those that are not entirely beautiful.
>
> (*Selected Poetry*, p. 101)

Yeats considers the intellectual hatred to be the worst kind of hatred because it is this opinionatedness that curbs the inner personality, 'radical innocence of the soul' 'the heart revealing

intimacy' and natural kindness'. Lord Krishna tells Arjuna the process of one's losing innocence in Chapter II : 62-64 [see supra]. Once the radical innocence has developed the pleasures and sorrows, angry looks of the people around become immaterial :

> Considering that, all hatred driven hence,
> The soul recovers radical innocence
> And learns at last that it is self delighting
> Self-appeasing, self affrighting,
> And that its own sweet will is Heaven's will.
> She can, though every face should scowl :
> And every windy quarter howl
> Or every bellows burst, be happy still.
>
> (*Selected Poetry*, pp. 102-103)

Actually, when a man becomes a *Sthita-Prajna* he is above joys and sorrows of this world and becomes indifferent to angry looks and sayings. Let many storms of destructions come, he is always happy and remains undisturbed. The Lord tells Arjuna :

> दुःखेष्वनुद्विगन्मनाः सुखेषु विगतस्पृहः ।
> वीतरागभयक्रोधः स्थितधीर्मुनिरूच्यते ।।
> यः सर्वत्रानभिस्नेहस्तत्तत्प्राप्य शुभाशुभम् ।
> नाभिनन्दति न देष्टि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठता ।।
>
> (The Bhagavadgita, II : 56-57)

The persona of 'Sailing to Byzantium' is disgusted with the world full of carnal desires. The people praise the unreal, momentary and temporal (Maya) things :

> That is no country for old men. The young
> In one another's arms, birds in the trees
> —Those dying generations—at their song
> The salmon falls, the mackeral—crowded seas,
> Fish, flesh, or fowl, commend all summer long
> Whatever ts begotten, born and dies.
> Caught in that sensual music all neglect
> Monuments of unageing intellect.
>
> (*Selected Poetry*, p. 104)

The Lord tells Arjuna that those who run after material things can never reach Him :

अनेकचित विभ्रान्ता मोहजालसमावृता ।
प्रसक्ता कामभोगेषु पतन्ति नरकेऽशुचौ ॥
आसुरीं योनिमापन्ना मूढा जन्मनि जन्मनि ।
मामप्राप्यैव कौन्तेय ततो यान्त्यधनां गतिम् ॥

(The Bhagavadgita, XVI : 16-20)

The persona of 'Sailing to Byzantium' describes himself as "A tattered coat upon a stick" (*Selected Paetry*, p. 104). This image has been taken from the Bhagavdgita. Lord Krishna tells Arjuna, "As a person puts on new garments, giving up old ones, similarly, the soul accepts new material bodies, giving up the old and useless ones" (II : 22). The image is very pertitent here because the persona is an old man and he is conscious of his fast approaching death. Therefore, he prays to God :

Consume my heart away; sick with desire
And fastend to a dying animal
It knows not what it is; and gather me
Into the artifice of eternity.

(*Selected Poetry*, p. 105)

In the Bhagavadgita we have Arjuna who wants to have a coordination between his senses and mind :

कार्पण्यदोषोपहतस्वभाव :
पृच्छामि त्वां धर्मसंमूढचेता: ।
यन्छ्रेय: स्यान्निश्चितं बूहि तन्मे
शिष्यस्तेऽहं शाधि मां त्वां प्रपन्नम् ॥
न हि प्रपश्यामि ममापनुधाद
यच्छोकमुच्छोषणमिन्द्रियाणाम् ।
अवाप्य भूवासपत्नमृद्धं
राज्यंसुराणामपि चाधिपत्यम् ॥

(The Bhagavadgita, II : 7-8)

Actually, overpowering one's senses is the precondition of becoming one with the eternal forces (The Bhagavadgita VII : 27-29).

The persona of 'Sailing to Byzantium' wants to be free from the bondage of life and death. He wants to get eternal form by being incarnated in the form of an immortal bird. Naturally, it is symbolical for his wish to become one with the eternal forces. Interestingly enough, *Mundaka Upanisada* (which was translated by Yeats himself and included in *Ten Principal Upanishads*) describes individual and eternal soul as two friendly birds sitting on the same tree. Swami Prabhupada has given the following commentary on this subject :

> One of the birds (the individual atomic soul) is eating the fruit of the tree, and the other bird is simply watching his friend. Of these two birds, although they are the same in quality, one is captivated by the fruits of the material tree, while the other is simply witnessing his activities. Krishna is the witnessing bird, and Arjuna is the eating bird. Although they are friends, one is still the master, and the other is servant. Forgetfulness of this relationship by the atomic soul is the cause af one's changing his position from one tree to another, or from one body to another. The *jiva* soul is struggling very hard on the tree of the material body, but as soon as he agrees to accept the other bird as the supreme spiritual master, as Arjuna has agreed to do by voluntary surrender into Krsna for instruction, the subordinate bird immediately becomes free from all lamentation.[43]

It is just this thought which is being expressed in the following lines :

> Once out of nature I shall never take
> My bodily form from any natural thing,
> But such a form as Grecian goldsmiths make
> Of hammered gold enamelling
> To keep a drowsy Emperor awake;
> Or set upon a golden bough to sing
> To lords and ladies of Byzantium
> Of what is past, or passing, or to come.
>
> (*Selected Poetry*, p. 105)

These lines echo basically the concept of *Moksha* which has been elucidated in the Bhagavadgita. Lord Krishna tells in the Bhagivadgita :

येषां त्वन्तगतं पापं जनानां पुण्यकर्मणाम् ।
ते द्वन्द्वमोहनिर्मुक्ता भजन्ते मां दृढव्रताः ।।
जरामरणमोक्षाय मामाश्रित्य यतन्ति वे ।
ते ब्रह्म तद्विदुः कृत्स्नमध्यात्मं कर्म चाखिलम् ।।

(VII : 28-29)

The bird made of hammered gold is also free from all desires, delusion and is ready to serve the Lord with full determination. Thus, it has taken refuge in the Lord and will consequently be free from the cycle of birth and death. The image of the golden bird of the third stanza of 'Byzantium' is in continuation from 'Sailing to Byzantium'. This bird is a symbol of the permanence of the purified soul. The bird is glorious because it is unchanging or eternal. Therefore, it is scornful of all complexities of mire and blood, it is scornful of the conflicting emotions and passions of human heart. The golden bird i.e. "eternal master" neither undergoes any change nor suffers from any conflict and confusion of which human beings are victims. Arjuna is told by Lord that He is not only imperishable but also unrecognizable because of Maya (confusion and illusion) :

अव्यक्तं व्यक्तिमापन्नं मन्यन्ते मामबुद्धयः ।
परं भावमजानन्तो ममाव्ययमनुत्तमम् ।।
नाहं प्रकाशः सर्वस्य योगमायासमावृतः ।
मूढ़ोऽयं नाभिजानाति लोको मामजमव्ययम् ।।

(VII : 24-25)

B. Rajan writes of 'Byzantium' : "Interpretations of 'Byzantium' are varied enough to suggest that every reader makes his own poem from the same words."[44] Thus it may be regarded as Yeats' greatest poem (and of course it remains to be the most obscure too) if judged from Lord Macaulay's point of view. The suggestivity of the poem comes from Yeats' all philosophies, beliefs, ideas and theories which find projection in it.[45] The theme of the poem is essentially a Hindu one—"The nature of the final

escape from the round of re-incarnation."[46] The activities of persons with *tamasic* nature have been described in the very first four lines :

> The unpurged images of the day recede
> The Emperor's drunken soldiery are abed
> Night resonance recedes, night walkers song
> After great cathedral gong.
>
> (*Selected Poetry*, p. 153)

These lines present a sharp contrast to the next four lines in which a person who has overpowered his senses and has acquired control over himself has been described. Such a man shines like a moon. He looks contemptuously at those who keep themselves involved in the day-today world :

> A starlit or moonlit dome disdains
> All that man is,
> All mere complexities,
> The fury and mire of human veins.
>
> (*Selected Poetry*, p. 153)

Lord Krishna has praised such a man in the following verses :

> विषया विनिवर्तन्ते निराहारस्य देहिनः ।
> रसवर्जं रसोऽप्यस्य परं दृष्ट्वा निवर्तते ॥
>
> (The Bhagavadgita, II : 59)

> न तद्भासयते सूर्यो न शशांङ्को न पावकः ।
> यद्गत्वा न निवर्तन्ते तद्धाम परमं मम ॥
>
> (The Bhagavadgita, XV : 6)

The image of "starlit or monlit dome" becomes more pertinent if we see it in the light of the following verse of the Bhagavadgita, XV : 13 :

> गामाविश्य च भूतानि धारयाम्यहमोजसा ।
> पुष्णामि चौषधिः सर्वाः सोमो भूत्वा रसात्मकः ॥

'A Dialogue of Self and Soul' is very important among Yeats' poems because in this poem the philosophy of the

Bhagavadgita finds a maximum projection at its utmost. The Bhagavadgita was a revolutionary book in the Indian philosophy in the sense that it directed a man to forget about the other world and concentrate whole-heartedly on this real life with all its earthiness. 'My Soul' of the poem argues for the other world at the expense of this life on this earth :

> I summon you to the winding ancient stair:
> Set all your mind upon the steep ascent,
> Upon the breathless starlit air,
> Upon the star that marks the hidden pole:
> Fix every wandering thought upon
> That quarter where all thought is done:
>
> (*Selected Poetry*, pp. 142-143)

For 'My Soul' what is important is the "ancestral night" (*Selected Poetry*, p. 143) which will deliver the person "from the crime of death and birth" (*Selected Poetry*, p. 843). 'My Soul' has no answer for the immediate problem of adorning Sato's ancestral sword which is covered with a piece of "tattered" and "faded" (*Selected Poetry*, p. 143) cloth except a scorn in the form of a question :

> Why should the imagination of a man
> Long past his prime remember things that are
> Emblematical of love and war ?
>
> (*Selected Poetry*, p. 143)

Arjuna in the Bhagavadgita, also, argues in the manner of the poem's 'My Soul' :

> निमित्तानि च पश्यामि विपरीतानि केशव ।
> न च श्रेयोऽनुपश्यामि हत्वा स्वजनमाहवे ॥
> एतान्न हन्तुमिच्छामि घ्नतोऽपि मधुसूदन ।
> अपि त्रैलोक्यराज्यस्य हेतोः किं नु महीकृते ॥
> तस्मान्नार्हा वयं हन्तु धार्तराष्ट्रान्स्वबान्धवान् ।
> स्वजनं हि कथं हत्वा सुखिनः स्याम माधव ॥
>
> (I : 31, 35, 37)

Lord Krishna makes Arjuna conscious of the immediate problem and tells him to concentrate on the present :

स्वधर्ममपि चावेक्ष्य न विकम्पितुमर्हसि ।
धर्म्याद्धि युद्धाच्छ्रेयोऽन्यत्क्षत्रियस्य न विद्यते ॥

(II : 31)

अथ चत्वमिमं धर्म्यं संग्रामं न करिष्यसि ।
ततः स्वधर्मं कीर्तिं च हित्वा पापमवाप्स्यसि ॥

(II : 33)

मयि सर्वाणि कर्माणि संन्यस्याध्यात्मचेतसा ।
निराशीर्निर्ममो भूत्वा युध्यस्य विगतज्वरः ॥

(III : 30)

Similarly, 'My Self' considers the problem of performing his immediate duty of caring for the sword more important than caring for the next life. 'My Self' is ready even "to commit the crime (of rebirth) once more" (*Selected Poetry*, p. 143) to do its duty. Seeing "My Self" adamant, "My Soul" once again throws the bait of 'Nirvana' with all its traits :

Such fullness in that quarter overflows
And falls into the basin of the mind
That man is stricken deaf and dumb and blind,
For intellect no longer knows
Is from the *Ought*, or *knower* from the *known*
That is to say, ascends to Heaven.

(*Selected Poetry*, pp. 143-144)

'My Self' does not yield to the temptation and says : "I am content to live it all again/And yet again..." (*Selected Poetry*, p. 144) because "...what's the good of an escape/If honour find him in the wintry blast ?" (*Selected Poetry*, p. 144). Morevoer, if a man commits some mistake he must accept the result (in the form of punishment as well) : "The folly that man does/Or must suffer, if he woos/A proud woman not kindred of his soul". (*Selected Poetry*, p. 144).

Lord Krishna has taught a similar lesson to Arjuna :

हतो वा प्राप्स्यसि स्वर्गं जित्वा वा भोक्ष्यसे महीम् ।
तस्मादुत्तिष्ठ कौन्तेय युद्धायकृतनिश्चयः ॥

(The Bhagavadgita II : 37)

In the very next verse Arjuna is taught the lesson of treating pleasure and pain alike and perform his duty :

सुखदुःखे समेकृत्वा लाभालाभौ जयाजयौ ।
ततो युद्धाय युज्यस्व नैवं पापमवाप्स्यसि ॥

(The Bhagavadgita II : 38)

It is such an attitude only which gives a man "gaiety", a theme elaborated by Yeats in 'Lapis Lazuli' (See Supra). Lord Krishna, therefore, teaches Arjuna :

विद्याविनयसंपन्ने ब्राह्मणे गवि हस्तिनि ।
शुनि चैव श्वपाके च पण्डिताः समदर्शिनः ॥

(The Bhagavadgita, V : 18)

The following lines of Yeats, echo the same idea :

When such as I cast out remorse
So great a sweetness flows into the breast
We must laugh and we must sing,
We are blest by everything,
Everything we look upon is blest.

(*Selected Poetry*, p. 145)

This is the stage of समत्वं (*Samtavam*), the highest state of bliss and contentment. Thus, we see that it is 'My Self' that ultimately wins the debate and not 'My Soul' as argued by Harold Bloom in the following lines : "The Soul takes the lead, despite the necessary priority of the Self in the title, and the triumph of the Self's solitary declaration in the poem's second part."[47]

Regarding his beliefs, theories, philosophy and practices Yeats once wrote :

> I believe in the practice and philosophy of what we have agreed to call magic...I believe in three doctrines, which have, as I think, been handed down from early times, and been the foundations of nearly all magical practices. These doctrines are :
>
> (i) That the borders of our minds are ever-shifting, and that many minds can blow into one another, as it were, and create or reveal a single mind, a single energy.
>
> (ii) That the borders of our memories are shifting and that our memories are a part of one great memory, the memory of Nature herself.[48]

Really speaking Yeats' study of ancient Indian thought and Hindu scriptures including the Bhagavadgita from different sources strengthened him in his opinions and beliefs. A. G. Stock writes in this connection :

> Yeats' own mind had an affinity with many things that he found in Indian thought and finding them must have given him confidence. It gave an itellectual justification to much that he believed with his feelings and helped to set in order tangled experiences which neither Christian oxthodoxy nor contemporary science could deal with.[49]

Austin Warren points out : "Yeats remained in 'A Vision' a theosophist, by implication entering the belief in Karma, Reincarnation and the eventual delivery from rebirth into the peace of Nirvana."[50] R. C. Shah echoes Austin Warren in the context of entire poetical corpus of W. B. Yeats and says : "Yeats' creative encounter with the Indian thought can be summed up as a journey from the 'lower mythology' of Karma and Reincarnation to the higher mythology as well as philosophy of the Upanishadic Self."[51] And Bachchan goes to the extent of saying : "Yeats...accepted the words of Mohini Chatterji and the Gita, not their spirit"[52]

Austin Warren's opinion is not tenable because theosophy had borrowed a lot of its beliefs and philosophical bases from many sources including the Indian thought and philosophical

treatises. A man like Yeats who himself had read and understood the original sources of theosophy like the *Vedas*, the *Upanishadas* and the Bhagavadgita cannot be called a theosophist simply because of his belief in Karma, Reincarnation and Nirvana which are three basic principles of Indian thought and philosophy. The whole structure of the Bhagavadgita stands on these three pillars.

Shah's opinion is also not tenable because the concept of 'Karma and Reincarnation' is neither 'lower' nor it is simply mythological. Rather, it provides a base to the philosophical thought to the Bhagavadgita. It has already been pointed out that the Bhagavadgita is a summary of the Upanisadas. Hence it would not be justified to describe Yeats' development of thought as a journey from 'Karma...to Upanishadic Self'.

That Bachchan's opinion is untenable is obvious from the illustrations I have cited above. What Bachchan calls "salvation of life was the re-living of this actual life"[53] for Yeats, also echoes the *Karma Yoga* of the Bhagavadgita. Bachchad himself proves my point when he elaborates on this point in the subsequent pages of his book.

It is quite well known that Yeats talked of writing "a sort of European Gita, or rather my [Yeats'] Gita, not doctrine but song."[54] The statement is enough to prove that Yeats was influenced not only by its thought content but also appreciated its poetic qualities. He made use of many poetic symbols and images of the Bhagavadgita as has been shown. May be even his 'musical poetry' was influenced in its musical quality[55] by 'The Divine Song' or the Bhagavadgita.

REFERENCES

1. a. According to Richard Elliman, "Max Mueller was probably the main source of Yeats' early knowledge of Vedanta." *The Identity of Yeats*, (London : Faber and Faber, 1963), p. 81.

b. T. R. Henn in his 'Foreword' to Harbans Rai Bachchan's *W. B. Yeats and Occultism* (Delhi : Motial Banarsidass, 1965), p. vii.

2. "*Gita* did not propound any new principle or philosophical system. Rather, it tried to incorporate various opposite thoughts in one philosophical treatise." K. Damodaran in *Indian Thought Tradition*, Hindi tr. G. Sridharan, (New Delhi : Peoples Publishing House Pvt. Ltd., 2nd ed. July 1979), p. 199. English tr. by me.

3. W. B. Yeats, "Reveries Over Childhood and Youth", *Autobiographies* (London : Macmillan, 1961), pp. 91-92.

4. John P. Frayne, *Uncollected Prose by W. B. Yeats* (London : Macmillian, 1970) Vol. I, p. 48.

5. W. B. Yeats, *Autobiographies*, p. 468.

6. W. B. Yeats, "The Poetry of A. E.", *Dublin Daily Express* of September 3, 1893, Collected and edited by John P. Frayne and Cotton Johnson, *Uncollected Prose of W. B. Yeats* Vol. II.

7. "Introduction to Gitanjali" *Gitanjali* (Delhi et. al. : Macmillan India, 1979 [1913]), p. XI.

8. Yeats wrote in the Preface of *The Holy Mountain* : "...whenever I have been tempted to go to Japan, China or India for my philosophy, Balzac has brought me back, reminded me of my preoccupatton with national, social, personal problems, convinced me that I cannot escape from our Comedie humaine." *Essays and Introductions*, (London : Macmillan, 1961), p. 448.

9. Yeats had *The Literature of Bengal* in his personal library. He had written a sentence about Vidyapati on it. Bachchan in *W. B. Yeats and Occultism*, p. 76.

10. "Purohit Swami was a strange mixture of sensuality and asceticism in his personal life and philosophy seemed to occupy, like Tagore, some intermediate place between a bias towards the soul and a bias towards the body." Richard Ellman, *The Identity of Yeats*, p. 183.

11. He is supposed to be one of the twenty four incarnations of Lord Vishnu.

12. a. सर्वोपनिषदो गावो दोग्धा गोपालनन्दन: ।
पार्थोवत्स: सुधीर्भोक्ता दुग्धं गीतामृतं महत् ॥
(a traditional verse)

b. "The philosophic background of the Gita is taken from the Upanishadas. Some verses are common to the Upanisadas and the Gita." S. Radhakrishnan, *Indian Philosophy* Vol. I (London : George Allen and Unwin, 1966 [1923]), p. 525.

13. Radhakrishnan (*Indian Philosophy* Vol. I p. 527) and K. Damodaran (*Indian Thought Tradition*, p. 201) quote Richard Garbe who wrote : "The teachings of the Samkhya–Yoga constitute almost entirely the foundation of the philosophical observations of the Bhagavadgita. In comparison with them Vedanta takes a second place. Samkhya and Yoga are often mentioned by name, while Vedanta appears only once (Vedantakrt, XV. 15), and then in the sense of Upanisada or treatise."

14. Richard Ellman, *Yeats : The Man and the Masks* (London : Faber, 1949), p. 279.

15. A. Norman Jeffares, *W. B. Yeats : Man and Poet*, (London : Routledge and Kegan Paul Ltd., 1966 [1849]), p. 281. Yeats' letter quoted.

16. Ernest Rhys, "W. B. Yeats : Early Recollections" in *W. B. Yeats : Interviews and Recollections* ed. E. H. Mikhail (London : Macmillan, 1977) Vol. I, p. 37.

17. Cited by H. R. Bachchan in *W. B. Yeats and Occultism*, pp. 159-160.

18. Preface to *The Ten Principal Upanishads*, Put into English by Shree Purohit Swami and W. B. Yeats (London : Faber, 1961 [1937]), p. 11.

19. *Letters on Poetry from W. B. Yeats to Dorothy Wellesley* (London : Oxford University Press, 1954), p. 19.

20. Yeats' introduction to Purohit Swami's *Aphorism of Patanjali* (London : Faber and Faber, 1973), p. 16.

21. Ibid., p. 11.

22. Preface to *The Ten Principal Upanishads*, p. 7.

23. *Uncollected Prose by W. B. Yeats* Vol. I, p. 141.

24. W. B. Yeats, *Selected Poetry* (London : Pan Books Ltd., 1974 [1962]), p. 178. In the textual references page numbers preceded by *Selected Poetry* refer to this edition of the book.

25. Bachchan, op. cit. p. 73.

26. Yeats grew "angrier and angrier" in that meeting because "England seemed even to those confused Indians the protector of liberty." He denounced the oppression of the people of India and told them how they had been forced to learn everything, even their own Sanskrit, through the vehicle of English till the first discoverer of wisdom had become by words for vague abstract facility. W. B. Yeats, *Essays and Introductions*, p. 387.

27. Ibid., p. 482.

28. Ibid., p. 483.

29. *Autobiographies*, p. 195.

30. Graham Hough, *The Last Romantics* (London : Duckworth, 1961), p. 251.

31. Ibid., p. 287.

32. *Collected Poems of W. B. Yeats* (London : Macmillan, 1950), p. 14. In the textual references page numbers preceded by *Collected Poems* refer to this edition of the book.

33. Quoted by Yeats, *Essays and Introductions*, pp. 137-138.

24. Cited by Bachchan, op. cit., p. 23.

35. Yeats, *The Wanderings of Oisin* (London, 18889), p. 134.

36. Ibid., p. 135.

37. B. Rajan, *W. B. Yeats* (London : Hutchinson University Libray, 1972 [1965]), p. 187.

38. *Bhagavadgita As It Is*, Ch. 2 verse 65 tr. A.C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada (Los Angles et. al. : The Bhaktivedanta Book Trust, 1972 [1968]), abridged edition, p. 40.

39. The eyes of Coleridge's Ancient Mariner are also ancient and glittering.

40. *Essays and Introductions*, op. cit., p. 482.

41. *Letters on Poetry from Yeats to Dorothy Wellesley*, op. cit., p. 8.

42. Keats wrote to one of his friends : "...a great poet has no other consideration but sense of beautiful. I write because I have a yearning passion

for beautiful. No matter what I write at night is changed into ashes the next day."

43. *Bhagavadgita As It Is*, pp. 28-29.

44. B. Rajan, op. cit., p. 142.

45. T. R. Henn, *The Lonely Tower* (London : Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1965 [1950]), pp. 220-237.

46. John Untrecker, *A Reader's Guide to William Butler Yeats* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1982 [1959], p. 217.

47. Harold Bloom, *Yeats* (London : Oxford University Press, 1972 [1970]), p. 373.

48. W. B. Yeats, *Essays and Introductions*, p. 28.

49. A. G. Stock, *W. B. Yeats : His Poetry and Thought* (Cambridge : Cambridge University Press, 1964), p. 12.

50. Austin Warren's essay in *The Permanence of Yeats*, Hall and Steinmann (eds.), (New York : Collier Books, 1961), p. 212.

51. Ramesh Chandra Shah, *Yeats and Eliot : Perspectives on India*, (New Delhi : Associated Publishing House, 1983), p. 62.

52. Bachchan, op. cit., p. 58.

53. Idem.

54. Yeats' letter to Ethel Mannin quoted in Ellman's *Yeats : The Man and the Masks*, p. 283.

55. Yeats' interest and emphasis on musicality is borne out by the following two extracts from his letters to Dorothy Wellesley :

> "Here you have a masterpiece (I have just put in the rhymes, made it a ballad" p. 56 and "I start chanting things because the rhyme of 'lord' & loud' etc. is not admissible in any prosody, then went on to the rest." p. 57 *Yeats Last Poems : A Case Book*, John Stallworthy (ed.) (London : Macmillan, 1968).

Sisirkumar Ghose

SRI AUROBINDO'S GITA : A SHORT SURVEY

From Shankaracharya, Sridhar, Madhusudan, to Tilak, Mahatma Gandhi, Radhakrishnan, to P. Lal, Prabhupada and Krishna Chaitanya, who has *not* written on the Gita ? Among these exegeses Sri Aurobindo's *Essays on the Gita* (1816–20) holds a place of its own. To deal with it in depth or detail here is out of the question. I shall only try to present a brief summary of this modern classic, with a few remarks of my own towards the end.

At the very outset Sri Aurobindo makes it clear that he is not much interested in extracting from the Gita its religious creeds or the metaphysical minutiae as these were understood by the men of its time. This is not possible and this is not what we want. What we are seeking is the "actual living truth helpful for the needs of present day humanity". Luckily, there is little that is local or temporal about the Gita. Whatever may have been its origin, the language and structure of its thought, the core of the teaching is universal, if not simple.

There are three factors we have immediately to seize in order to make sense of its central situation : the divine Teacher, the disciple, their relationship, and the grisly occasion of the teaching. The Teacher is the eternal incarnation of the Divine, the Inner Voice. There is also the historic, human Krishna not the hero but the guide of mankind, who will reveal Himself only at the psychological moment. There is the disciple, a Representative Man, whose despair and original inaction start the long dialogue. He is a man of action, the Aryan fighter, not a seer or thinker. His emotional cry expresses the ordinary consciousness. He is

frequently perplexed and it will take some time before his perplexities are sorted out. In course of this we get a complex, classic graded statement of the action of the free soul *muktasya karma.* In an hour of crisis Krishna speaks or sings of the unitive vision as it has rarely been sung.

Is the Gita a book of Knowledge, Devotion or Works ? Every exclusive interpretation has its champion. Sri Aurobindo knows well how easy it is, by throwing particular emphasis, to turn it into a partisan of one's own pet dogma or doctrine. Following contemporary fashion, it is customary to speak of it as a Gospel of Works. But what the Gita teaches is not a human but a divine action, not the performance of social duty, but doing the will of the Supreme. A change of nature and consciousness is an essential part of the programme. The Gita is not a book of practical ethics but of spiritual life. The disciple has to rise beyond the determinisms of Nature, Prakriti, and her three modes gunas, before right action can begin. This is the solution or the great word with which the Gita closes.

What about the provocation, the field of action ? Kurukshetra, the field of battle, symbolic of life, is hard to deny. Gita does not palliate. It sees life as it is before setting out to lift it to a higher scale of values. The question of withdrawal does not arise. Neither Krishna nor Arjuna is a sadhu or a sanyasi. Its philosophy is catholic, affirmative, positive. Addressed to a fighter on the battlefield, the Gita is not a tract for the pacifist. Man meets the challenge of conflict in keeping with his dominant quality, *svabhava,* poised, passionate and inert, *sattvic, rajasic, tamasic.* In the end he goes beyond the gunas, *trigunatita.* He has to act, but from a high elevation. The Gita that is Krishna, has little sympathy for Arjuna's unmanly, un-Aryan self-pity. The *vishad* yoga has to give place to *kartavyan karma,* the work to be done. In the situation where Arjuna is placed, not to fight would be the worse sin. It is an inner, not an outer, renunciation that the Gita recommends.

There is no right action without right thinking. The clarification of the issue, of existence, is the heart of the Gita's matter. It involves a distinction between Sankhya and Yoga, their reconciliation or surpassing. The Gita does not admit Samkhya's

multiplicity of the Purushas or its atheism. It modifies Yoga no less. The Gita's Yoga is not Patanjali's. Less rigid, and non-ascetic, the Gita gives samadhi and nirvana a fillip for action. It posits a triple nature for the Self or Purusha, Purushottama, whose higher Nature *para prakriti* replaces the lower.

In effect what we have to give up is ego and desire, not action. Knowledge is not an end in itself. Work done in the right spirit can be a means of liberation. The Gita is not addressed to sanyasis, though they seem to have monopolised it to this day. Even Vedic fundamentalism does not escape Krishna's censure.

The somewhat "arid tract of metaphysics," as Sri Aurobindo calls it, is a prelude to the Yoga of Intelligent Will, of Works and surrender and sacrifice. The secret of reconciliation lies not in inaction but desireless action, a much harder thing. This calls for some semantic clarification of the ideas of Yoga, Yajna, Karma and Brahman itself. The analysis culminates in a God-Vision by which, as Krishna puts it, "Thou shalt see all Existence in the self, in Me". The Gita's roots, one might say, are above, in the mystical. Its blend of the logical and the a-logical is part of the paradox that is poetry.

That the Self is in all things, *sarvabhutam*, is the supreme secret, *utamam rahasyam*. All truth of action depends on the truth of being, on one's grade of consciousness. The ignorant individual—Freud spoke of His Majesty the Ego—is sure to miss the Law of Sacrifice. It is only the enlightened soul that knows that even after liberation action is not only possible but imperative.

The Lord himself explains : "I have no work that I need to do in all the three worlds, I have nothing that I have not gained and have yet to gain, and I abide verily in the path of action. ...As those who know not act with attachment to the action, he who knows should act without attachment, having for his motive the holding together of people" (*loksamgraha*). According to Sri Aurobindo, there are few more important passages in the Gita. In this the Gita goes far beyond modern pragmatism and the Welfare State.

The secret to be learnt is at one with the secret of the divine birth. However much the materialist mind may demur, the Gita

takes the Aavtar for granted, God in man, the divine in history. Its affiliation with Vedanta is a great help. The crisis in which the Avatar appears is always a crisis of consciousness.

The Gita's Karmayoga, subjective, spiritual, supra-ethical, is for the divine worker. All work is to be done by a soul in union with the Divine. It is skill in works, *yoga karmasu kaushalam.* The divine worker has no personal enemy, no personal hope or preference. He has peace and joy in all that he does.

The normal person dreads Equality of soul, a "rare and purer air of life," as Sir Aurobindo calls it. It is not the same as tamasic equality, indifference or the imperturbable Stoic stance. The source is elsewhere; also the true sage is engaged in the good of all; *sarvabhutahite ratah.*

Yoga and knowledge are the two wings of the soul's ascent. Of course the knowledge of which the Gita speaks is not intellectual knowledge but self-knowledge, *jnana.* The mark of such self-knowledge is equaiity founded on one's oneness with all beings. The foundation is obviously Vedantic. He who sees Me in all things and beings sees truly. What greater word of power...for love has been uttered by any philosophy or any religion ? asks Sri Aurobindo.

This means that the subjection of the ego sense to the mechanism of Nature, Prakriti, is not final or absolute. There is both a freer Self and a higher Nature (*Para Prakriti*). The Gita distinguishes between levels of consciousness. The ego is ever the slave, even when it dreams of freedom; "nine-tenths of our freedom is complete fiction;" says Sri Aurobindo and he could not have been more right. It is the soul that is free, the lord, *Isvara.*

Nature and ego are not all we are. There is also the free soul, the Self, Purusha. And this Purusha is not a non-doer, as the Samkhya suggested. It is not *akarta* but *karta.* When we get back to the source, we acquire a natural mastery. The Gita is a school, a course for Man the Master. This is indeed freedom autonomous that depends on nothing external. By becoming identified with the Higher Self—what Krishna calls *madbhava maccita*—we reach the final evolution of our being and nature. Reborn, we have a divine birth. The passion for self-exceeding is in all men, in varying measures, according to the capacity of the vessel or instrument.

In its own way the Gita gives an extended meaning to many of the concepts it finds handy : *yoga yajna, tapas avadhaya,* etc. It uses the word nirvana frequently. But not in the quietist, Buddhist fashion, not as a samadhi that virtually ignores of wishes away the world. This was, by the way, not the way of Mahayana Buddhism, with its strong emphasis on Karuna or Compassion. For the advanced soul there can be no fear; disgust or recoil. He has to see all before he can go beyond everything. Bhakti with knowledge is the best.

II

In the second movement of his exposition, Krishna deals in more detail with the double nature in man. This helps him to ground bhakti over all other motives : "to know Me in all the principles of existence", *tattvatah.* Everything turns on a momentous decision. But what rich rewards : "To Me turn and come, cross over the Maya."

The Gita distinguishes among four psychological types of bhaktas—the sorrowing, the boon-seeker, the seeker after knowledge and the wise, *arta, artharthi, jijnasu* and *jnani* and finds a place for each. In the same tolerant way, the Lord does not reject any form of approach or adoration, be it a leaf, a flower or water. Of course the *nityayukta,* for ever united in consciousness with the Lord is ahead of others.

Without perfect faith, *shraddha,* one will never reach the Real or the Highest. Yo know the divine truth and tread the divine Way of Knowldge, Devotion and Works demands a synoptic vision. This Reality, a self-fulfilling Transcendence is ancient wisdom, *prajna purani,* that is being revealed once more, to raise mankind to a higher level of awareness and action.

The vision of the Lord, *visvarupa darshan,* one of the most moving passages in the whole of the Gita, is needed for Arjuna, who has been left high and dry by what must have been to him abstruse analysis. The dual aspect of the Divine, destroyer and preserver, is not overlooked. The justification is more than poetic and makes for total devotion, a willingness to fight. The aside, if it is not more than that, on two types, *daivi* and *asuri,* the divine and the demonic, is more than local. It has a deep occult truth behind it, as true today as during all over yesterdays. In life as in a crisis, to follow *svabhava,* the law of one's own being, is safety. Better to perish in fulfilling one's law of being

than in pursuing another's law.

After a firm but elaborate exposition Krishna sums up the entire argument. The supreme secret is given in a few verses, both a command and a consolation : abandon all rules and follow Me, *sarvadharman parityajya mameka smaranam vraja.*

In a crescendo of inspired words Sri Aurobindo himself has summed up the Gita's deathless message : "The real truth of all action is more inwardly subjective. Each man has a law of his inner being, *Svadharma*, which he must observe, find out and follow. All this action, however, even at its best, is subject to the ignorance of the mind and the play of the *Gunas*. But now you can follow that action with perfect self-knowledge and can make of it a sacrifice to the Master of your Existence.

> And when you are able to do that sincerely, that will be the moment to renounce the initiation of your acts without exception into the hands of the supreme Godhead within you. Then you will be released from all laws of condct, all Dharmas. Because each initiation of your acts will come from above andwithin you in an imperative knowledge and an illumined assent to the divine wisdom. The battle will be his, his the victory, his the empire.
>
> This then is the supreme movement, this complete surrender of your whole self and nature, the abandonment of all Dharmas to the Divine who is your highest self. The higher secret and mystery, the deepest and most intimate truth of your real and spiritual existence is yet an inner movement progressively realisable by all.

Thus spake Sri Aurobindo reinterpreting for us what Krishna had said.

A few words before we end. A monument of India's unageing intellect, the Gita is a Rock of Ages, a perennial Guide to the Perplexed. A daylight miracle, mixing logic with magic, its immense architecture has a classic solidity, a sheer manliness, and unflappable poise. The Gita more than Milton justifies the ways of God to men. That such an elite exercise should have become part of our folklore is a standing tribute to Indian culture. Even a little of it is enough to save. Rarely has the human-divine drama

laced with existentialism older than today's, and the crisis of choice received such confident handling. One can only marvel at the mind of Krishna's maker, the legendary Vyasa, whom Sri Aurobindo for his purpose has left out of account. Here is the chance of a lifetime for an Indian scholar, to write about the Gita as a literary work, comparable, as some have hinted, with *The Divine Comedy*.

No scripture can hope to be the last word. For his part, Sri Aurobindo does not mind pointing out one or two limitations of the Gita. To him it seems the problem of collective humanity is insufficiently emphasised. Also, as we can see, Sri Aurobindo has not only commented on the Gita, he has his own Gita as it were. Such works as *The Life Divine*, *The Synthesis of Yoga* and *Savitri* are his testament about "the end of Death; the death of Ignorance" in terms of the descent of the Supermind and transformation down to the physical, even the hope of a gnostic society. The national psyche that could produce the Gita is still at work, if we will but listen. May be the dialogue on the battlefield will turn more into an internal monologue, the inner war without escape.

A matching visionary, matching eloquence with wisdom, Sri Aurobindo's own voice almost merges into Krishna's. In the *Kalagni* of a nuclear holocaust the Voice has gone out again, the voice of one whom the Mother had called the Avatar of Tomorrow. But where is his Arjuna to prove that we do not belong to the past dawns, but to the noons of the future ? Or is Kurukshetra a continuing darkness at noon and Dharmarajya and Vrindavan a dream ?

Satya Prakash Singh

IMPACT OF THE GITA ON SRI AUROBINDO'S PHILOSOPHY

The Gita contains the quintessence of the Indian philsophical and religious wisdom. Although embodied in the colossus of one lakh verses, as the Mahabharata is, it did not take time to be recognized as the most precious philsophical disquisition ever penned down by an Indian. While Upanisads are the quintessence of the Vedas, the Gita is the quintessence of the Upanisads themselves. This is maintained by the famous allegorical verse coming down along with the Gita since untold ages. It images out the Upanisads as Cows, Krsna as milk-man, Arjuna as Calf and the Gita as milk.[1] And it is not without significance that this essence of the essentials of Indian thought was squeezed out in the face of a momentous crisis in the Indian history, the war of Mahabharata. That is why people, in India take recourse to it in the state of deepest crisis and bewilderment both in individual and collective life. This is vindicated not only by a large number of Vedantic thinkers during the middle ages, but also by intellectuals and political thinkers of the modern Indian renaissance studying the Bhagavadgita most assiduously and taking out time to explain it to the common masses in the midst of deepest crisis of their personal as well as national life. Swami Vivekanand, Tilaka, Gandhi, Dr. Bhagwan Das, Vinoba Bhave and Sri Aurobindo are but a few among them.

Among these also Sri Aurobindo's association with the Gita is by far the most significant.What singles him out from the others is the peculiar way in which he came to be acquainted with the thought of the Gita.Interestingly enough, while others understood the

Gita through its text which is the normal course, Sri Aurobindo was initiated into it, as he claims, through its archetypal author, Krsna himself. As he has revealed in his Uttarapara speech soon after his release from Alipore jail in 1909, he remained quiet for some time utterly bewildered in Lal Bazar jail at the idea as to why he was landed in jail at all when he was perfectly all right in his intentions and actions: "What is this that has happened to me ? I believed that I had a mission to work for the people of my country and until that work was done, I should have the protection. Why then am I here and on such a charge ?"[2] He cried out in his heart like this. On the thrid day after this, a Voice came from within, "Wait and see." After some time, he was shifted to the Alipore jail and was kept in complete seclusion. Here also he doubted the wisdom of God in landing him in jail when he had intended only to serve hss people. At this eventually there emerged the figure of Krsna telling him as it were, "The bonds you had not strength to break, I have broken for you because it is not my will nor was it ever my intention that should continue. I have had another thing for you to do and it is for that I have brought you here, to teach you what you could not learn for yourself and to train you for my work."[3] "Then", observes Sri Aurobindo, "He placed the Gita in my hands. His strength entered into me and I was able to do the Sadhana of the Gita".[4] Later on he believes that it was due to some sort of inspiration from Krsna that he was permitted to take a walk outside his cell for half an hour in the morning and in the evening. In course of such a walk the strength of Krsna entered into him once again. Consequently, he says, "I looked at the jail that secluded me from men and it was no longer by its high walls that I was imprisoned; no, it was Vasudeva who surrounded me. I walked under the branches of the tree in front of my cell but it was not the tree, I knew it was Vasudeva, it was Sri Krishna whom I saw standing there and holding over me his shade. I looked at the bars of my cell, the very grating that did duty for a door and again I saw Vasudeva. It was Narayana who was guarding and standing sentry over me. Or I lay on the coarse blankets that were given me for a couch and felt the arms of Sri Krishna around me, the arms of my friend and Lover." He characterizes this as the "first use of the deeper vision he gave" him.[5]

Later on he was placed for some time among those who were accused along with him. In contrast to the nobility and steadfastness of some of these co-prisoners what he felt about himself he says, "I knew then that I the man was a mass of weakness, a faulty and imperfect instrument, strong only when a higher strength entered into me."[6] Then again the figure of Krsna emerged from within him and said to him, "What have you to fear ? If you stood aside or slept, the work would still be done... you have only got some strength from me to this nation which will help to raise it."[7] Immediately after the above instruction what occurred has been put by Sri Aurobindo as follows :

"Then a thing happened suddenly and in a moment I was hurried away to the seclusion of solitary cell. What happened to me during that period I am not impelled to say, but only this that day after day He showed me His wonders..."

What he abstained from disclosing in public, finds a beautiful expression in the following sonnet :

At least I find a meaning of soul's birth
Into this universe terrible and sweet,
I who have felt the hungry heart of earth
Aspiring beyond heaven to Krishna's feet.
I have seen the beauty of immortal eyes,
And heard the passion of the Lover's flute,
And known a deathless ecstasy's surpirse
And sorrow in my heart for ever mute.
Nearer and nearer now the music draws,
Life shudders with a strange felicity;
All Nature is a wide enamoured pause
Hoping her lord to touch, to clasp, to be.
For this one moment lived the ages past:
The world now throbs fulfilled in me at last.[8]

Needless to remind ourselves that beginning from the time of his imprisonment until now the world had become entirely irrational and life meningless to Sri Aurobindo. Everything had assumed the look of vacuity, terrible for sight. He was put in some such a state of utter bewilderment in which Dirghatamas, a Rgvedic seer seems to have felt himself when he observes "I do not know what I am like; in utter deprivation do I move associated with mind."[9] It was on account of this bewilderment perhaps

that the seer was nicknamed as above meaning 'one steeped in long darkness.' The darkness, however; got eventually transformed for him into eternal light characterized as *ekam sat*, 'sole existence,' bearing within it the supreme footstep of Visnu with its fountain of bliss as well as the manifest world of dolorous look. Some such transformation takes place in the life of Sri Aurobindo following the vision of Krsna. As a result of the vision the otherwise empty world begins to throb fulfilled within the visionary as its epicentre for whom one moment of this experience becomes more than ages.

Inspired by this beatific experience, Sri Aurobindo eventually exclaims :

> O immense Light and thou, O spirit, wide, boundless space,
> Whom have you clasped and hid, deathless limb, glorified face ?
> Vainly lie Space and Time, "Void are we, there is none."
> Vainly strive Self and World crying, "I, I alone."
> One is there, Self of self, Soul of space, fount of time,
> Heart of hearts, Mind of minds, He alone sits sublime.
> Oh, no void Asolute self-absorbed, splendid, mute,
> Hands that clasp hold and red lips that kiss blow the flute.
> All He loves, all He moves, all are His, all are He !
> Many limbs sate His whims, bear His sweet ecstasy.
> Two in one, Two who know difference rich in sense,
> Two to clasp, One to be, this His strange mystery.[10]

Thus the vision ultimately settles down as a constant realization. Hence onward Sri Aurobindo began to experience his oneness with Krsna not as a matter of momentary flash of vision but as an eternal verity.

This is why the Mother addressed him on her very first sight of him in Pondicherry in 1912 as Krsna. It was Krsna-consciousness which he claims to have brought down on his *siddhi* day on Nov. 24, 1926 from the region of the Overmind. But not satiated with this much, he continued his *Sadhana* until his leaving the mortal coil on Dec. 5, 1950 for bringing down a still

higher locus of consciousness called by him Supermind. Of course it was on account of his identification of the Overmind with the Krsna-consciousness and further effort for bringing down Supramental consciousness that he happened to create doubt in certain minds that he was going to prove himself as higher than Krsna even. In answer to this sort of doubt expressed in a letter to him, he writes as under :

"You cannot expect me to argue about my own spiritual greatness in comparison with Krishna's ,,...what Krishna must I challenge,.....the Krishna of the Gita who is the transcendent Godhead, Paramatma, Parabrahma, Purushottama, the cosmic Deity, Master of the universe, Vasudeva who is all, the Immanent in the heart of all creatures, or the Godhead who was incarnate at Brindavan and Dwaraka and Kurukshetra and who was the guide of my yoga and with whom I realised identity ? All that is not to me something philsophical or mental but a matter of daily and hourly realisation and intimate to the stuff of my consciousness. Then from what position can I adjudicate this dispute."[11]

This position of Sri Aurobindo's vis-a-vis Krsna's is quite explicable in terms of cognate examples found in the Vedas and the Upanisads. In the Rgveda there is a female seer, daughter of one Ambhrni, who comes to realize her identity with Vak, speech as Such.[12]

Another well known seer Vamadeva sayshow he realized his identity with a number of gods.[13] The whole thing is summarily explained by the Upanisadic observation : *brahmavid brahmaiva bhavati*, 'The knower of Brahman becomes Brahman itself.' This is further testified by Krsna himself in the Bhagavadgita when he asks Arjuna to contemplate always Him, to devote himself wholly to Him, to sacrifice everything of his to Him, to pay his obeissance to Him and promises that thereby he would infallibly reach Him.[14] Thus what was set as the goal for Arjnna, was attained by Sri Aurobindo before taking to write anything on the Gita or giving exposition to his philosophy as such which was started in right earnest in 1914 with the publication of Arya.

There has been a raging controversy among writers on the Gita whether Krsna was a historical figure or not and whether the Gita is an actual part of the Mahabharata or an independent creation subsequently interpolated in the epic. Sri Aurobindo is

fully aware of this problem. But his solution to the problem is significantly different from those of others. Instead of negating either his historicity or divinity, which has been made the basis of the solution of the problem by others, Sir Aurobindo accepts Krsna as a reality both historically and theologically. In his view, the war of the Mahabharata must be a historical verity wherein Krsna must have played the role of the supereme controller of the entire warfare. This he does in the capacity of an incarnation of the Supreme Being termed by Sri Aurobindo as Saccidananda. If the Supreme can manifest itself in the form of the self-evolving world progressing by and by towards itself, there is no contradiction as such in the same.

Supreme incarnating itself at times intervenes in the cosmic progression to serve as a corrective measure. Having at its background involution which lies in self-immersion and self-oblivion of Saccidananda, the world along with its inherent existence, consciousness and delight has embedded in its nature something of ignorance. Hence, in spite of all the ingeniousness of the implicitly present Supermind directing the evolutionary process, the onward march of the cosmos is likely to be hampered by undivine powers lying low in the texture of the world. It is for removing these impedients in the evolutionary course that Saccidananda is necessitated to bring itself directly to the world as an incarnation. Sri Aurobindo regards Krsna as one of such incarnations and at that a very prominent one, as it represents the delight-aspect of Saccidananda which is yet to manifest itself in its essentials in the evolutionary process. The process has brought the world into existence and has made consciousness manifest it with the development of the mind. The essential delight is yet to be evolved out of it through the development of the psychic being. The inordinate assertion of the sense- mind and the ego is a great deterrent to the development of the psychic being and the *caitya purusa.* This is a problem which did not only face Arjuna equipped with all his reasoning power and sense of personal valour, but is very much there even today bogging the path of human evolution. Hence the Krsna-consciousness is as much a necessity today as it was at the time of the Mahabharata. That is why Sri Aurobindo observes that if "Christ from his cross humanised Europe, the colloquy at Kurukshetra will yet liberate humanity."[15]

The above role assigned to Krsna in the cosmic scheme

envisaged by Sri Aurobindo is in conformity with the view of the Gita with a certain dlfference in stress. In the Gita Krsna presents before Arjuna a number of alternative solutions to the problems of life in the world in the form of renunciation, meditation, devotion and action. Out of these while renunciation and meditation are selective and separative, devotion and action are universally practicable and unificatory. Devotion unites the devotee with the deity directly while action unites the doer with the Supreme Creator through the field of action, that is the world. Thus the admittance of action as a way to salvation entails admittance of the reality of the world in the absolute sense also. Since the world was not admissible as real in the absolute sense to Sankara, he always negates the efficacy of action as a way to salvation. In this respect he goes counter to the teaching of the Gita which again and again enjoins upon Arjuna to achieve his objective, metaphysical as well as mundane, through action. But according to it, the action has got to be undertaken with a higher viewpoint where each action of the individual is to be taken up consciously as a part of the cosmic process being carried constantly by the Supreme Being. Inculcation of this higher viewpoint, however, involves metaphysical reflection, deep meditation and intense devotion. For, without these, one can neither understand the causality of the Supreme Being in the cosmic process nor free oneself from the lust for the fruit of the action. This is why in one of his conclusive advices to Arjuna, Krsna asks him to undertake action as a means of devotion to the Supreme Being considering Him as the ultimate source of the creation as well as constant presence in it. To translate the relevant verse

> From whom the beings have come out and who pervades all this, Having worshipped him by means of one's action, man obtains ultimate fulfilment.[16]

Obviously to understand the Divine as the creator and eternal presence in the creation is a colossal cognitive task which can be accomplished by nothing less than philsophical reflection and deep meditation. This is what goes by the name *jnana marga*, the path of knowledge. Further, dedication of each and every one of one's actions to the Supreme Being involves intense sense of renunciation towards the fruits of one's actions as well as unflinching faith in the Being as the bearer of one's *Yoga* and *Ksema*. All this

cannot be accomplished without unflinching devotion. Thus the admittance of the efficacy of the path of action as a way to salvation, which indeed the Gita preaches more vehemently than anything else, involves acceptance of the reality of the world ever tending toward a divine destiny on the one hand and the necessity of synthesising all the paths to the Divine together, besides, and even more fundamentally, admitting the Supreme Being as the creator, sustainer, guide and final destination of the cosmic process.

Interestingly enough, these requisite pre-conditions of the path of action as propounded by the Gita form the essentials of the philosophy of Sri Aurobindo. In fact, if the Gita proposes the *Para Purusa* as the supreme reality, Sri Aurobindo admits the same as *Saccidananda* and puts Him at the apex of his entire philosophical system. In his view, the *sat* of Saccidananda provides for the existential value of the world, *cit* for its inherent consciousness and *ananda* for its pleasures, joys and delights. However, what the Gita does not duly provide for in regard to reversal of these essential values until a considerably advanced stage in the cosmic process, is stipulated by him in the form of his doctrine of involution which has its prototype in the Rgvedic idea of the self-sacrifice of the Supreme Being.[17] As regards his doctrine of evolution, involving progression from Matter to Supermind and eventually return of the creation to Saccidananda, that has its basic structure in the Gita's doctrine of the final recovery of the cosmos to the Highest Purusa. In this process of recovery, Krsna, according to Sri Aurobindo as well as the Gita, comes down as a blissful incarnation of the Supreme Being for th e sake of eliminating obstructive forces and facilitating the progression. Sri Aurobindo associates him with the Overmind from where he is supposed to come down to the world for guiding the spiritual seekers as well as eliminating the obstructive forces. Higher, more powerful and more comprehensive than this overmind incarnation, however, he considers the supramental descent. Whereas the Overmind incarnation is selective in his action, the supramental is all-encompassing in its transformatary effect. Thus the former is in a way preparatory to the latter. This is what Sri Aurobindo means when he says : "Krishna's opening the Overmind certainly made it possible for the attempt at bringing Supermind to the earth to be made."[18]

Lastly Sri Aurobindo's idea of integral yoga also has its foundation particularly in the Gita. Apart from the Gita, yoga, whether in the form of knowledge, devotion, action or *hatha*, is indeed something out and out exclusive, private and personal having little to do with the worldly and social life. It is the Gita which more comprehensively and systematically than any other work, broadened the scope of yoga so as not only to shed off mutual exclusiveness among the different systems to it but also to encompass the whole of life in all its diverse activities. Basing himself on this wider concept of yoga, Sri Aurobindo does not only synthesize all the systems of traditional yoga together organically but also takes the whole of life as a yoga meant for condensing the process of man's progression to the Divine and the latter's descent to the human world. In him yoga has become a tool not only of developing the conscious but also of illuminating and transforming the unconscious; it lies not only in ascent but also in descent, integration and transformation culminating eventually in the prospect of divinising the world. This is not only theoretically explained in his philsophical works but is also artistically represented through several character-sketches in his *Savitri*.

Thus in spite of his inestimably wide range of study beginning from the Rgveda to the modern disciplines of knowledge, and all of them getting so beautifully synthesized in the philosophy so as to make it indisputably the most comprehensive system of thought envisaged by anyone so far. If any one book has influenced him most that is the Bhagavadgita and if any being has impressed him most that is Krsna.

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J. P. Savita

E. M. FORSTER'S 'BOUM' AND VISHWAROOPA IN BHAGAVADGITA

गीता सुगीता कर्तव्या किं अन्यैः शास्त्र-विस्तरैः ?

(Once you master the Gita, there is no need going to other scriptures).

A foreigner visiting the land of the Vedas—specially if he has intellectual pretensions—thinks it advisable to have a nodding acquaintance with this Book of Books, believing it to be the very quintessence of ancient Hindoo scriptures, which of course it is. In 1912 when E.M. Forster undertook his first journey to India, he was no ordinary visitor to this country. He had by that time established himself as a serious writer with several novels to his credit which had earned respectibility in literary circles. That Forster had read his Gita is clear from an article published around this period and later included in Arbinger Harvest (1936). Entitled "Hymn before Action", this article is a sort of critical examination of Krishna's threefold logic with which he persuaded Arjuna to take up arms against the Kauravas—and more specially the famous concept of 'action without attachment' (निष्काम कर्मयोग) which forms the main plank of the philosophy of the Gita. Forster's interpretation runs as follows :

Arjuna must fight for three reasons. The first reason, Forster holds can never appeal to a Westerner. It assumes death is negligible—not even a gate leading to a new universe, but merely a passage leading back through birth to this. Why hesitate to traverse such a passage ? Why hesitate to send others down it since they must soon return ? The body kills or dies, the dweller in the body

does neither. Now the Westerner will argue that though such a doctrine may inspire heroes, it is equally an excuse for cowards. All incentives to action, all rules for conduct are made void by it. If nothing that is done in the body matters, then why need we do anything ? If to slay and to be slain are the same, then to be fled from and to flee are also the same and dishonour is as negligible as death. But as if expecting this criticism, the divine charioteer proceeds at once to his second reason for blooshed. Duty... Yet, (Forster argues) how shall the hero escape the inevitable stain of war, the insolence of victory, the venom of defeat ?...The remainder of the poem is concerned with Krishna's third reason, which deals with the problem of renunciation and attempts to harmonise the needs of this life with eternal truth...Convinced...Arjun... drives into the battle rejoicing and wins a great victory. But it is necessarily and rightly followed by disillusionment and remorse. The fall of his enimies (Forster concludes) leads to his own for the fortune of men are all bound up together, and it is impossible to inflict damage without receiving it.[1]

What a suave conclusion worthy of a liberal humanist like Forster ! Were that it as simple as that.

Great must have been Forster's bafflement when he had come to Chapter XI of the Gita which speaks of the Virat or Vishwaroopa of the Lord—symbolising the all-inclusiveness of Hinduism which for a Westerner is something hard to comprehend, much less to appreciate. Significantly the Lord before his cosmic manifestation blesses Arjuna with divine insight so that he could see this grand sublime vision :

न तु मां शक्यसे द्रष्टुमनेनैव स्व चक्षुषा ।
दिव्यं ददामि ते चक्षुः पश्य में योगमैश्वरम् ॥

Gita XI-8

(But thou canst not behold Me with this (human) eye of yours. I will bestow on thee the supernatural eye. Behold my divine power).*

Human eye can see only the outward form, the inner soul is perceived by the eye of spirit, when we are under the influence of grace and direct knowledge of spiritual realities "The Gold's vision is a gift of God. The whole account is a poetic device to indicate

*English version of the verses quoted is from Dr. S. Radharkrishan's translation of the Bhagavadgita.

the unity of the Cosmic manifold in the Divine nature. The vision is not a mental construction but the disclosure of a truth beyond the finite mind."[2]

पश्यामि देवास्तव देव देहे
सर्वास्तथा भूत विशेष संघान्
ब्रह्माणमीश कमलासनस्थ—
मृषीश्र् सर्वानुरंगाश्च दिव्यान्

अनेक बाहूदर वकत्र नेत्रं
पश्यामि त्वां सर्वतोऽनन्तरूपम्
नान्तं न मध्यं न पुनस्तवादिं
पश्यामि विश्वेश्वर विश्वरूप

Gita XI-15-16

(In Thy body, God, I see all the gods and the varied hosts of beings as well—Brahma, the lord seated on the lotus throne and all the holy sages and nagas...

I behold Thee infinite in form on all sides, with numberless arms, bellies, faces and eyes but I see not Thy end or Thy middle or Thy beginning. O Lord of the Universe, O Form Universal).

धावा पृथिव्योरिदमन्तरं हि
व्यांप्तं त्वयैकेन दिशश्र् सर्वाः ।
दृष्ट्वाद्भुतं रूपसुग्रं तवेदं
लोक त्रयं प्रव्यथितं महात्मन् ॥

Gita XI-20

(This space between heaven and earth is pervaded by Thee alone, also all the quarters (directions of the sky). O Exalted one, when this wondrous terrible form of Thine is seen, the three worlds tremble).

And further—

दंष्ट्रा करालानि च ते मुखानि
दृष्टैव कालानलसिन्नभानि ।
दिशो न जाने न लभे च शर्म
प्रसीद देवेश जगन्निवास

Gita XI-75

(When I see Thy mouths terrible with their tusks, like Time's

devouring flames, I lose sense of the directions and find no peace. By gracious, O Lord of gods, Refuge of the worlds).

Arjuna loses his bearings. The tremendous experience has in it clements of astonishment, terror and rapture.

As Arjuna has the vision of the warriors of both sides rushing into the flaming mouth of the Lord, he cries out :

यथा नदीनां बहवोऽम्बुवेगाः
समुद्रमेवाभिमुखा द्रवन्ति ।
तथा तवामी नरलोकवीरा
विशन्ति वक्त्राण्यभिविज्वलन्त्ति

यथा प्रदीप्तं ज्वलनं पतंगा
विशन्ति नाशाय समृद्धवेगाः
तथैव नाशाय विशन्ति लोका--
स्तवापि वक्त्राणि समृद्धवेगाः

लेलिह्यसे ग्रसमानः समन्ता—
ल्लोकान्समग्रान्वदनै र्ज्वलद्भिः
तेजोभिरापूर्य जगत्समग्रं
भासस्तवोग्राः प्रतपन्ति विष्णो ।

Gita—XI 28, 29, 30

(As the many rushing torrents of rivers race towards the ocean, so do these heroes of the world of man rush into Thy flaming mouth.

As mouth rush swiftly into blazing fire to perish there, so do these men rush into Thy mouths with great speed to their own destruction.

Devouring all the worlds on every side with Thy flaming mouths Thou lickest them up. The fiery rays fill the whole universe and scorch it with their fierce radiance).

The writer points out through the conception of world-form how the whole cosmos with its vastness, beauty and terror, gods, blessed souls, animals, plants are all there in the plenitude of God's life. God cannot move outside Himself, having all within Himself. We, human beings who think discursively, are occupied now with one object and now with another. We think consequentially but the Divine mind knows all as one. There is no past to it, nor future.[3]

In 1921 E. M. Forster paid his second visit to India. Three years later was published his magnum opus—*A Passage to India* which is so far easily the best novel on India written by a foreigner. It is in the words of Rex Warner a "brilliant and preplexing book where vision and nightmare tread close upon each other's heels and often go hand in hand."[4] A sense not so much of mystery as of bafflement looms large over this book. In Chapter VII Cyril Fielding (Forster's own mouth-piece) defines mystery as 'only a high sounding muddle'. So is India in Forster's estimation. 'Life is everywhere chaotic. Even the birds refuse to be identified'. To him, "Nothing in India is identifiable, the mere asking of a question causes it to disappear or to merge in something else". And again, "How can the mind take hold of such a country ? She calls through her hundred mouths, through objects ridiculous and August. But come to what ? She has never defined. She is not a promise, only an appeal" (Chapter XIV).

The bafflement reaches its acme in the 'Caves' section which comprises nearly half the book and is as it were its fulcrum. The Marabar Caves in *A Passage to India* symbolise evil which a pantheistic religion like Hinduism accepts as part of the Cosmic spectrum. They are 'dark caves' (Chapter XII).[5] "Nothing" says Forster, "distinguishes one cave from another. It is as if the surrounding plain or the passing birds have taken upon themselves to exclaim 'extraordinary' and the word has taken root in the air, and been inhaled by mankind" (Chapter XII). Look at the description of the sinister echo in these caves in Chapter XIV : "The echo in a Marabar cave...is entirely devoid of distinction. Whatever is said the same monotonous noise replies and quivers up and down the walls until it is absorbed into the roof. 'Boum' is the sound as far as the human alphabet can express it or 'bououm' or 'ou-boum'—utterly dull. Hope, politeness, the blowing of a nose, the squeak of a boot, all produce 'boum'. Even the striking of a match starts a little worm coiling, which is too small to complete a circle, but is eternally watchful. And if several people talk at once, an overlapping howling noise begins, echoes generate echo, and the cave is stuffed with a snake composed of small snakes, which writhe independently."

Does the 'bouom' from the caves reflect the depth of the universe represented by the Hindu mystic symbol AUM ओऽम् ? In the metaphysics of the Vedas as well as the Gita, the doctrinal base of

all Hinduism, Brahman, the absolute reality is without attributes, without distinction, nothing can be ascribed to it, nothing said of it, it is unknowable. In Chapter XXI, when Adela asks Mrs. Moore what the echo is, the latter replies "If you don't know, you don't know. I can't tell you'.

The echo exercises its evil impact on all who visit the caves. Adela's reason comes to be unsettled. Aziz believes that he suffers from disaster because he had challanged the spirit of the Indian earth which tries to keep men in compartments. And above all Mrs. Moore, the very Magna mater of this novel, a syballine personality who receives impulses from the transcendental realm. Before her experience in the Cave, she had been a religious mystic who believed in a God whose divine love extends towards all creatures, high and low. He is a Unity which includes everything. Such a unity appears to her as beautiful and dignified. Now in the caves the echo speaks of a universe which is unity but this unity also means total negation in which good and evil are identical; beauty and ugliness are the same. "Pathos, piety courage—they exist but are identical, and so is filth. Everything exists, nothing has value" (Chapter XIV). "But suddenly at the edge of her mind Religion appeared, poor little talkative Christianity, and she knew that all its divine words from 'Let their be light' to 'It is finished' only amount to Boum" (Chapter XIV). "She had come to a state" remarks the novelist 'when the horror of the universe and its smallness are both visible at the same time—the twilight of the double vision in which so many elderly involved". (Chapter XXIII). 'She loses all interest, even in Aziz, in love, in life, in everything. She would not be dragged at all to Ronny's 'ludicrous court's and when the latter asks her what she wants, she replies 'I want my pack of patience cards'. Elsewhere Forster comments "Visionsare supposed to entail profoundity but—wait till you get one, dear reader ! The abyss also may be petty, the serpent of eternity made of maggots"...(Chapter XXIII). It is sheer apathy and not (as made out by James McConkey) "something similar to Nirvana when the individual soul (Atman) merges with the pure being and all distinction moral as well as physical is obliterated."[6]

The nearest Forster comes to fathoming of the Eastern spirit is his creation of Professor Narayan Godbole even if it is a (calculatingly) comic figure he creates. Nirad C. Choudhry actually calls him a 'Clown'.[7] Characteristically it is Prof. Godbole who

does not join the excursion to the Marabar Caves. The caves are known to him but Aziz fails in his attempt to get Godbole to describe them. When he puts questions to Godbole the latter rather evades replies to them or remains silent. The author's remarks are noteworthy—"The comparatively simple mind of the Mohamedan was encountering Ancient Night." Godbole knows that "Good and evil are different as their names imply" but hastens to add 'they are both aspects of my Lord. He is present in the one, absent in the other,...Yet absence implies presence, absence is not non-existence, and we are therefore entitled to repeat 'come, come, come, come' (Chapter XIX). He also knows that nothing can be performed in isolation. "All perform a good action, when one is performed, and when an evil action is performed, all perform it."

Of course, the Hindoo view of universalising individual suffering and immediate evil, cannot be accepted by a rational European and Godbole's logic will sould to him as conundrum. Yet against the antivision of Moore, Godbole's vision is universal. It can accept both evil and good, absence and presence, chaos and unity as reality. Godbole's sense of detachment makes him preserve his sense of values without inviting frustration which overtakes even Mrs. Moore a person of actue awareness. He suffers from no discord, and is perfectly attuned to a harmonious way of life. He is what the Gita describes as 'Yogin' or Sthit Pragya.

दु:खेष्वनुद्विग्नमना: सुखेषु विगतस्पृह: ।
बीत राग भय क्रोध: स्थित धीर्मुनिरूच्यते ॥

Gita-II-56

(He whose mind is untroubled in the midst of sorrows and is free from eager desire amid pleasure, he from whom passion, fear and rage have passed away, he is called a sage of settled intelligence).

य: सर्वत्रानभि स्नेहस्वत्ततत्प्राप्य शुभाशुभम् ।
नाभिनन्दन्ति द्वेष्टि तस्य प्रज्ञा प्रतिष्ठता ॥

Gita-II-57

(He who is without affection on any side, who does not rejoice or loathe as he obtains good or evil, his intelligance is firmly set in vision).

Godbole is the man who lives entirely in the spirit. His love is something that exists only by detaching itself from the world of

things and human relationship. In his detachment Godbole as the representative of the Universal spirit of Hinduism makes no distinction between man and the rest of things; he is one of those who believe that each particular unit in the world of things is part of every other unit and that all is one in the Divine.

न प्रहृष्येत्प्रियं प्राप्य नोद्विजेत्प्राप्य चाप्रियम्
स्थिर बुद्धिर संमूढ़ो ब्रह्मविदब्रह्माणि स्थितः

Gita-V-20

(One should not rejoice on obtaining what is pleasant, nor sorrow on obtaining what is unpleasant: He who is (thus) firm of understanding and unbewildered, (such a) knower of God is established in God).

And further—

यो मां पश्यति सर्वत्र सर्व च मयि पश्यति ।
तस्याहं न प्रणश्यामि स च न मे प्रणश्यति ॥
सर्व भूत स्थितं यो मे मां भजत्येकत्वमास्थित ।
सर्वथा वर्थमानोऽपिसयोगी मयि वर्तते ॥
आत्मौपम्येन सर्वत्र समं पश्यति योऽर्जुन ।
सुखं वा यदि या दुःखंसयोगी परमो मतः ॥

Gita-VI 30, 31, 32

(He who sees Me every where and sees all in Me; I am not lost to him nor he is lost to Me.

The Yogin who established in oneness worships Me abiding in all beings lives in Me, howsever he may be active.

He, O Arjuna, who sees with equality everything, in the image of his own self, whether in pleasure or in pain, he is considered a perfect Yogi).

× × × × ×

In the Gita, as Arjuna sees the sublime vision of the Vishwaroopa, he is struck with awe and prays :

अदृष्टपूर्व हृषितोऽस्मि दृष्टवा
भयेन च प्रव्यथितं मनो मे ।
तदेव में दर्शय देव रूपं
प्रसीद देवेश जगन्निवास ॥

Gita-XI-45

(I have seen what was never seen before and I rejoice but my heart is shaken with fear. Show me that other (previous) form of Thine, O God and be gracious, O Lord of the gods and Refuge of the Universe).

After the harrowing, flesh creeping episode of the Marabar Caves, comes the Temple part of the novel. The celebration of the Gokul Ashtami here is just the other side of the same medal Forster confided to Alan Wilde that the Hindoo festival represented the same thing as the scene in the caves 'turned inside out'[8]. Mau where the celebrations take place is 200 miles away from the evil caves of Marabar and it is cool season which is the propitious season for harmony and peace and the Hindoo Brahmin Godbole is presiding over the ceremony of Lord Krishna's birth. Clearly we have escaped in space and time from the Marabar hills and all that they symbolise and we are now promised intimations of perfect harmony and reconciliation. Thus if the caves represent one extreme of India, its reality in one sense, Godbole's spirit of love rising to ecstasy expresses its other extreme, its other reality.

It will be naive to believe that Forster approves what he elsewhere calls 'the mess and profusion and confusion of Gokul Ashtami. He personally attended the festival at Devas and found that there was 'no dignity, no form' in it. In *A Passage to India* also the description of the festival is through and through ironical. It is a strange juxtaposition of the sublime and the ridiculous verging upon the ludicrous. Is he near the Infinite or the inane ? Indeed the two aspects—comical and spiritual—exist side by side in Godbole.

However unlike the two Christian missionaries, (Mr. Grayford and young Mr. Sorley) in the earlier part of the novel Godbole can extend his love to include even a wasp. "One old English woman and one little wasp" he exclaims. "It does not seem much, still it is more than I am myself."

Thus Godbole brings the two widely different living beings—the one human, and the other animal—in his mind together and at the same time. In this vision of universal love, an old woman and a tiny creature are both parts of infinite love, human, animal and spiritual are interchangeable, no one and nothing is rejected. Only Hinduism possesses this inclusiveness and the Gita confirms it in no uncertain terms.

एतद्योनीनि भूतानि सर्वाणीत्युपधारय ।
अहं कृत्स्नस्य जगतः प्रभवः प्रलयस्तथा ॥
मत्तः परतरं नान्यत्किंचिदस्ति धनंजय ।
मयि सर्वमिदं प्रोतं मणि गणा इव ॥

Gita VII-6, 7

(Know that all things have their birth in this. I am the origin of all this world and its dissolution as well.

There is nothing whatever that is higher than I, O winner of wealth (Arjuna) : All that is here is strung on Me as rows of gems on a string).

Also,

यथाकाशस्थितो नित्यं वायुः सर्वत्रगो महान ।
तथा सर्वाणि भूतानि मत्स्थानीत्युपधारय ॥

Cita IX—6

(As the mighty air moving everywhere, ever abides in the etheric space (akasa), know thou that in the same manner all existences abide in Me).

In their worship the Hindoos make no fixed exclusion—they don't exclude music nor humour; they don't even exclude and muddle. The Temple part offers a sort of reconciliation. It is a sort of cancellation of the Marabar caves, an affirmative answer to the negating echo of the Marabar. Godbole's cry 'Come, come, come' is at last answered as God comes to one and all.

"Infinite love took upon itself the form of Sri Krishna and saved the world" (Chapter XXIII).

Forster admires this living force of the Hindu religion which the Hindus can respond to as something larger than their private selves and by which they can grasp the mystery of the universe. The Hindus recognise that man must have some relation with the Unseen and the Inexplicable, even though such a relation may involve them in a muddle.

Muddle, O dear Yes, that is the word. Part of the decoration at the Gokul Ashtami festival are the inscriptions which the poets of the State had composed. One of them (composed in English to indicate His universality) consisted, by an unfortunate slip of the draughtsman, of the words 'God Si Love' and remarks Forster :—
'God Si Love' Is this the final message of India ?

Tukaram...Tukaram...

continued the choir...(Chapter XXIII).

This is the over all impression. And this is not Gita. Forster's novel is an attempt at understanding India. But attempting is not succeeding. Here what we come across is not the sublimity of a mystery but the sheer majesty of muddledom. Muddy waters look deep also. *A Passage to India* is a great novel. It is an artistic triumph. Its manipulation of the rhythm and pattern technique is simply superb. But it has failed to do justice to Hinduism and to Gita. D.H. Lawrence was really inspired when he wrote, "Forster does not understand his Hindu. And India to him is just negative because he does not go down to the root to meet him. He 'toys' with Hinduism."[11]

In the final analysis, Forster as an exponent of Hinduism and of the Gita deserves the accolade he allowed to democracy—just two cheers, and will be well advised for not being too liberal with the third !

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2. S. Radha Krishnan, The Bhagavadgita : Blackie and Sons (India Ltd.) January 1977 edition p. 272.

3. Ibid., p. 278.

4. Warner Rex, E.M. Forster British Council Pamphlets 1951, p. 27.

5. According to Prof. Frank Kermode Forster achieves a good deal of his effect here by an insistent use of the word 'extraordinary'. The first sentence of the whole book reads. "Except for the Marabar caves and they are twenty miles off—the city of Chandrapore presents nothing extraordinary." The last sentence of the first chapter ends with a mention of the Marabar hills containing the extraordinary caves and so on.

6. McConey James : The Novels of E.M. Forster : Ithaca 1957.

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8. Wilde Alan : Art and Order : A Study of E. M. Forster, London; Peter Owen (1946) p. 151, F.N.

9. Forster, E.M. : The Hill of Devi : New York : Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1953, p. 193.

10. Forster actually developed this view as part of his philosophy. The very first sentence of his famous essay 'What I Believe' is 'I do not believe in

belief'. He holds that no perfect order is possible that ideas must be compromised and disillusionment accepted. Life is not made up of antagonistic principles, of simple good and evil at war with each other but of muddle...In A Room With a View (1908) Mr. Emerson might be taken to be an idealised portrait of Forster's own humanist optimism..."All life" he says, "is perhaps a knot, a tangle, a blemish in eternal smoothness.""But why" he asks characteristically "should this make us unhappy. Let us rather love one another and wish and rejoice. I don't believe in this world sorrow." (Chapter II).

11. Huxley, Aldous (ed.) The Letters of D.H. Lawrence 1956, p. 614.

Braj Nandan Sahay

INFLUENCE OF THE BHAGAVADGITA ON L. H. MYERS

Leopold Hamilton Myers commands a special attraction for Indian students. Among the Western creative writers who ever wrote on the Indian theme, Myers remains unique. In this context we may be reminded of Philip Meadows Taylor, Flora Annie Steel, Rudyard Kipling, Parr Cooper, Rumer Godden, Edward Thompson, John Masters, E. M. Forster, Somerset Maugham and Aldous Huxley. Among them all, none has been able to depict what is essential in the Indian ways of life and thought as profoundly as Myers does; none has explored the Indian mind with that deep and subtle insight which Myers possesses. His tetralogy, *The Near and the Far*, is created on an epic scale in richness of exprience, variety of human figures, dignity of outlook and moral seriousness of intention. Besides this massive philosophical work, even E. M. Forster's *A Passage to India* looks small in aim as well as achievement.

During the twenties and thirties of the present century, Myers worte seven novels but none of them with an English background. His first novel *The Otissers* deals with a domestic struggle over the inheritance of a landed property somewhere in Wales. *The Clio*, his second novel, deals with the experience of a pleasure trip undertaken by a few rich and fashionable men and women in a yacht up the Amazon in Brazil. *Strange Glory* explores the values of personal relationship in the lives of men and women living in the swampy surroundings of New Orleans. The remaining four novels of Myers are *The Near and the Far*, *Prince Jali*, *Rajah Amar* and *The Pool of Vishnu*. They form a sequence and transport the

readers into the medieval world of 16th-century India during the reign of Akbar, the Mughal Emperor. The first three of them were published as a trilogy under the title *The Root and the Flower*. When *The Pool of Vishnu* came out, all the four novels were published under the title *The Near and the Far*.

Myers is a philosophical novelist and his habit of thinking was rooted in the moments of isolation during his childhood. He spent his awe-stricken childhood in an atmosphere of agnosticism and psychical investigation pursued by his father, F. H. W. Myers. His home was turned into a veritable psychical laboratory which was not congenial for a highly sensitive boy like Leo Myers. Very early in life, therefore, he was overawed by the supernatural and it was for him a somewhat perturbing home. In fact, his presence at some of his father's experiments had a somewhat traumatic effect on the child's mind, as can be realised in his intimately autobiographical portrait of Jali's character in *The Near and the Far*. His father's researches did not have a healthy influence on the child's mind and shattered that psychological security which the father's figure might be supposed to provide. Thereafter his complete dependence on a mother of strong and highly emotional personality, who "adored him with a passionate unwavering, spoiling possessiveness",[1] was destined to have a powerful influence on the shaping of his personality.

The childhood experiences of Myers invite a significant comparison with those of D. H. Lawrence. Both happened to hate their fathers and love their mothers. Some particular childhood experiences of each of them developed into peculiar traits in the formation of personality. But when grown-up, they turned to be wide apart and their difference can be said to resemble that between Amar and Sita in *The Near and the Far*. They are aware of imperfection in human relationship and they aim at achieving perfection, but the paths they have chosen are determined by the differences of personality. When Lawrence attempted to reach perfection through the blood, Myers turned to the Spirit.

Leaning towards the Spirit played, indeed, a very important part in Myers's belief, but he did not try to comprehend it through any religious dogma. For a time he was influenced by the Theosophical Society of Madame Blavatsky, very popular in his days. As his biographer G. H. Bantock and his friend Stapledon

have recorded, Myers made a study of Sanskrit and turned to Buddhism and other Eastern philosophies in search of solutions to his spiritual problems. Christianity had turned so distasteful to him that he went to the extent of ensuring Graham Greene on the point that he was a Catholic. He could not, however, put his belief in anything that tended to become a separate institution. This element of disbelief in him shows a trace of his father's influence on the shaping of his personality. For sometime Myers too was an agnostic but the reaction soon took place forcing him to find something to believe in and depend upon.

For sometime Myers was fascinated by the Bloomsbury Group of artists and men of letters. Its members believed in the sanctity of personal relationship and a full liberty of expression. There was in them a high sense of moral superiority and even a Bloomsbury voice, emphatic and restrained, with a peculiar cadence and insolence of effect. The group was considerably influenced by G. E. Moor's *Principia Ethica.* Under its influence, nothing mattered except states of mind, divorced from action, achievement or consequence. The members recognised no moral obligation on them, no inner sanction, to conform or to obey. Social sanction as an end in itself dropped out of their ideal. Hence, their aesthetic notions were divorced from the life of society, and personal relationships became an end in themslves. Their humanism was of a highly self-conscious coterie which had too little basis in anything but itself.

Myers reacted against the narrow sense of superiority and self-regard enjoyed by the Bloomsbury groap. In his opinion personal relationships were to be extended to the life of the society at large, and they were not to provide an end in themselves. Ultimately his was the morality of social action, not that of private aesthetic contemplation. His distaste for the Bloomsbury ethos speaks for itself in the Pleasance of the Arts in *The Root and the Flower.*

Gradually, Myers came to believe in an institution that existed in his own mind. He believed in the person, the society and the Spirit; and they are the three pillars on which the edifice of his philosophical thinking is based. In the modern world of scepticism and breakdown of traditional belief, Myers strove for the creation of a common ground of belief, for which he explored

the world of Spirit and preached through his novels what may be called a philosophy of spiritualism.

From a study of his letters and his biography it becomes obvious that all through his life Myers struggled hard for the attainment of spiritual peace. He detested all sorts of hypocrisy, even in its most subtle forms, and sought the basis for real peace and happiness in life. Dissatisfied with Christian beliefs, he turned to Buddhism and finally to the *Upanishads* and the Bhagavadgita for the right answers to his problems. In his massive tetralogy, *The Near and the Far*, Myers presents a confrontation of various religions and schools of thought, and his own reactions to Christianity and Buddhism are well-illustrated by the influence that the teachings of Prince Jali's Buddhist father and Christian mother had on the boy. Myers cannot approve of the following based on blind faith that Christianity demands. He cannot swallow its fanciful ideas of the birth of a soul, from nowhere, into body, and the resurrection of the latter on the Last Day. On the other hand, there is unsatisfying Buddhism that lies stripped bare of all speculation. In fact, neither Christianity nor Buddhism can satisfy the questionings of Jali's growing mind. In the palace he is beset with problems of appearance and reality :

> For the real Jali—who was he ? What was he ? and he really could not say. Anyhow he did not seem to be taking part at all, when it was a question of human intercourse. The true self seemed to be isolated by its own inalienable nature from other true selves. It was appearances that formed the bridge between person and person...[2]

Jali feels that his Buddhist father and Christian mother stand midway between him and his alien world. He moves further towards the 'solidity' of appearnce and the 'nothingness' of reality :

> It seemed to him that he was at last gaining light. To live in and for reality was to dwindle and fade, to accept appearance was to wax fat and grow strong.[3]

This is how Jali feels when he tries to understand the religions of his parents and the ways of the outer world. While getting education under Gokal's guidance, Jali can neither emerge with

a mind quickened to the truth of the Buddhist doctrine, nor prepare himself to accept without question the principles of Christianity. He belies, in reality, the hopes of both father and mother.

It is beyond doubt that Myers has put his most intimate thoughts in the mind of Jali, thoughts chiefly centring round the problems of essence and existence. These thoughts and the puzzlements of Jali bring him very close to the problems of the ancient Indian philosophy. To the philosophical Indian mind the only problem is that of the soul. What is the real self ? How is it distinguished from mind and body ? What is its nature ? How can it be known ? How are the varying worlds of living beings to be reconciled ? These are surely some of the important issues of the Hindu school of thought.

Such doubts are cleared to Myers only when he has come to believe in the identity of the 'Brahman' in the *Upanishad*s or 'Paramatma' in the Bhagavadgita. Myers prefers to call Him by the name of 'Spirit'. He also believes in the existence and immortality of the soul, about which the *Brihadaranyaka Upanishad* says :

> It is the soul, the Spirit, the Self, that must be seen and be heard and have overthoughts and meditation. O Maitreyi, when the soul is seen and heard, is thought upon and is known, then all that 'is' becomes known.[4]

Prince Jali feels that this Soul is ignored by his parents, perhaps because it is ignored in their religions, Buddhism and Christianity. He is fully conscious of the limitations, of these religions and he compares them later with the religion of Gunevati, who lives in her body and for whom her body is her present sufficiency. Myers writes :

> His parents' vision, Jali told himself, was just as limited as Gunevati's, but whereas hers was limited by ignorance, theirs was limited by an unconscious will to ignore.[5]

On the other hand, Prince Jali also comes across a third religion. It is the religion of Gokul the Brahmin who ignores nothing in life—neither meditation nor 'maya' in the form of Gunevati. He knows that "those who do not live in contact with reality can do nothing—nothing to promote either evil or good."[6]

Myers explores the chasm between illusion and reality. In fact, the opening of *The Near and the Far* serves as a microcosm of his big design. It seems to bring into significant relationship the opposed world of being and becoming, the worlds of realities and appearances. After a tiresome journey across the desert, Prince Jali is leaning over the balcony of the palace at Agra and is reminded of the scene viewed from his father's palace at home. He is struck by the nature of his two contrary impressions :

> There were two deserts : one that was a glory for the eye, another that it was a weariness to trudge. Deep in his heart he cherished the belief that the near and the far would meet.[7]

Prince Jali's problem is really the problem of the author. On the one hand, there is the phenomenal world in all its potential beauty, intermixed with its transience, its corruption, and frequent underlying evil; on the other, there lies a detached mental state of freedom from 'Maya'. Myers aspires after a realization of the truth about both—'Maya',the worldly reality, and Spirit, the ultimate reality, about which Lord Krishna speaks to Arjuna in the Bhagavadgita :

> The unreal has no existence, and the real never ceases to be; the reality of both has thus been perceived by the seers of truth.[8]

Myers's distinction between the world of 'Maya' and that of 'Spirit' seems to be based on the notions of the unreal and the real in the Bhagavadgita. He believes in the external nature of the soul and he calls the ultimate reality by the name of Spirit. He believes that 'Spirit is the world's master' and "it is no use trying to outwit the spiritual laws that govern mankind",[9] as the Guru advises Damayanti. He seems to have a realization of the Spirit of which Lord Krishna speaks to Arjuna in the Bhagavadgita :

> Spirit even when dwelling in this body, is really transcendent beyond the triple nature. He has been declared to be the witness, the Guide, the Sustainer, the Experien-

> cer of pleasure and pain, the Supreme Lord, the Over-soul.[10]

It is this belief in the all-embracing Spirit that leads Myers to attach a unique importance to what he calls the spiritual sense. As Amar explains :

> The spiritual sense, the faculty of spiritual discrimination must function on a plain superior to that of the other senses or intuitions because it is the valuator of those other modes of valuing. It is the co-ordinator of judgments by standards that otherwise have nothing in common.[11]

Elaborating on the importance of the spiritul sense Amar goes on :

> It is through his moral, rational and aesthetic intentions that man apprehends certain goods, but the apprehension of the spiritual order of the universe is apprehended by the spiritual sense, and by that faculty alone.[12]

Myers's notion of 'spiritual sense' seems to be a version of what the Bhagavadgita calls 'Sadhana' or spiritual discipline. It is as if one's spiritual sense is awakened when one immerses oneself into 'Sadhana'. Myers is fully aware of the two courses of Sadhana of which Lord Krishna speaks to Arjuna :

> Arjuna, in this world two courses of Sadhana have been enunciatad by Me in the past. In the case of the Sankhyayogi, the Sadhana proceeds along the path of Knowledge, whereas in the case of the Karmayogi; it proceeds along the path of Action.[13]

Myers also believes that the path of Action is superior to the path of Knowledge as it is said in the Bhagavadgita :

> The Yoga of Knowledge and the Yoga of Action both lead to supreme bliss. Of the two, however, the Yoga of Action is superior to the Yoga of knowledge.[14]

This is why Myers subordinates knowledge, as it were, to

action which should be the perennial concern of man in this world. His characters like Gokal, Amar and the Guru have not been granted the state of freedom from action in spite of the fact that they have attained Knowledge of the Self or are aspiring hard for it.

Really speaking, Myers has conceived the notion of a fine amalgam of the Sankhya Yoga and the Karma Yoga of the Bhagavadgita. First of all, man has to gain spiritual knowledge, a knowledge of Self, and this knowledge means, as the Guru speaks to Prince Jali :

> You know that Spirit is the world's master. You know that you are not the slave of mechanical fate but the master of divine destiny. You know that there is a divine meaning in the life of the world—in the life of men: of men, of you and of me.[15]

This Knowledge is to be gained not in solitude but in the community, in this very world of separated things, though contemplation in solitude may be required for the ripening of the acquired knowledge. Prince Jali has a mystical experience of the ultimate reality, the Spirit or the Self, beside the pool 'in which Vishnu has been lying for hundreds of years', while he plays on the flute at the request of Damayanti in the silent air around him. While describing Jali's experience, Myers writes :

> He was weaving a spell about her, he was contributing magic or his own to these moments of divine enchantment. With an intensity unknown to him ever before he was aware of the world around him—branch entangled gleamings left behind by the sun, a cool upwelling from the low-hung moon, small bird-sounds, leafy silences; scents—now cold, now warm—breathed up from water and the stone. All this he felt, all this he 'was' 'Tat tvam asi'.[16]

Having a realisation of this sense of oneness of worldly realities and the divine reality, the young Prince is now ready to enter into the world of action. The final lesson of the Guru imparted to Jali runs like this :

> The knowledge gained in communion and ripened in solitue, must pour its life into the world through action.[17]

This means that Myers does not approve of the attainment of knowledge unless it leads to action. Action is, as it were, the spiritual necessity in the face of the evil of the world. Myers establishes a sort of correspondence or correlation between inner awareness and enlightenment with action in the outer sphere. This is well-illustrated in *The Near and the Far* by the actions of Rajah Amar and the Guru. Rajah Amar strikes against Prince Daniyal who is, as it were, the incarnation of evil, and the Guru fights on behalf of the poor and the suppressed, and they do so without thinking in the least of the terrible consequence of their actions. It seems that they have learnt the lessem of disinterested action preached in the Bhagavadgita :

> Therefore, always efficiently do your duty without attachment. Doing work without attachment man attains the Supreme. It is through action alone that Janak and other wise men reaehed perfection. Having an eye to the maintenance of the world order too, you should take to action.[18]

This gospel of 'Karma' lies at the heart of Myers's concept of personal relationship which comprises, among other things, the complete equality between persons and the right of every person to be treated on equal footing by another. All this is possible through cultivating the virtues of purity of intention, faith, candour and self-conquest. These virtues help man conquer the various forms of worldly illusions and prepare him for the spiritual obligation to act :

> Man is under an obligation to act—under a psychological necessity that is also a spiritual obligation. He is the chief instrument of the supernatural energy determining whatever in time shall come pass.[19]

This emphasis on the necessity of action has certainly its source in the gospel of the Bhagavadgita ;

> Your right is to work only, but never to the fruit there of. Let not the fruit of action be your object, nor let your attachment be to inaction.[20]

This gospel of 'Karma' implies not merely the performance of domestic duties or the discharge of social responsibilities, but 'spiritualized action', the 'Karma Yoga', as it is called in the Bhagavadgita. It is only as worldly affairs are spiritualized and transformed that they become a part of the 'Karma Yoga'. In short, the temporal life and spiritual values stand in a relation of harmony and they constitute one divine life. Myers's philosophy, does not aspire as high as the Gita. The state of the 'Karma Yoga' is transcended in the Gita by the growth of a higher knowledge about which Sri Aurobindo writes :

> An inner situation may even arise, as with the Buddha, in which all duties have to be abandoned, trampled on, flung aside, in order to follow the call of the Divine within...The Gita does not teach the disinterested performance of duties, but the following of the divine life, the abandonment of all dharmas, 'sarvadharman' to take refuge in the Supreme alone, and the divine activity of a Buddha, a Ramkrishna, a Vivekananda is perfectly in consonance with this teaching.[21]

Myers does not aim so high and his attempt is limited to the gospel of the 'Karma Yoga' to which all the personal, social and moral virtues of man stand subservient.

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Jitender Kumar Sharma

FADE OUT THE BUDDHA, FADE IN LORD KRISHNA: COMPARATIVE OBSERVATIONS ON T.S. ELIOT AND HERMANN HESSE

O you who turn the wheel and look windward,
Consider Phlebas, who was once handsome and tall as you.

—*The Waste Land*

'And do not think of the fruit of action.
Fare forward.

O voyagers, O seamen,
You who come to port, and you whose bodies
Will suffer the trial and judgement of the son,
Or whatever event, this is your real destination'.
Not fare well,
But fare forward, voyagers.

—*The Dry Salvages*

In Hermann Hesse's *Siddhartha* the death-by-water episode,[1] thematically as well as structurally, serves to highlight the shift from the Buddhist to the Hindu view of life. Siddhartha's time with Kamla, the courtesan, symbolic of the world of the sense, comes to a despairing end, even as his flirtations with asceticism had earlier ended in dejection. Asceticism had failed him in his confrontation with the "Other" and sensuality fails him in his confrontation with Time. Both Siddhartha and Ramla are overcome by fears of age, decline and death. Leaving the pregnant Kamla behind, Siddhartha is once again drawn to the river which he had crossed to get away from asceticism and the doctrine

of Gotama, the Buddha. He sits under a tree and contemplates suicide—death-by-Water. However, as he looks into the water and sees his own image, he spits on his reflected face. In a "flash" he realizes the truth which had evaded him in his wayward pursuit of it : the Buddhist distinction between *Sansara* and *Nirvana*, the categorical distinction between the world of time and the timeless, is itself a great illusion and so cannot help overcome other illusions. Or to put it positively and in Eliot's words: "Only through time, time is conquered."[2]

The lines from *The Waste Land*[3] quoted above are from the section entitled "Death By Water" and not only do they evoke a similar mood as we experience in the scene of Siddhartha's contemplated suicide but they also obviously parallel the legend of Lord Buddha's renunciation. As a youthful prince, brought up within the confines of a pleasure-palace, he had never known the world outside his palace. On three successive occasions when he made excursions to the outskirts of the town, he met, with sights which were in utter contrast to the setting of his perennially youthful plessure-palace, situated in Kapil Vastu : on his first visit, he saw a man shrieking with pain, on his second visit, he saw an old man bent with age and on his third visit, he saw a dead man being carried to the burning ghats. The prince became aware that he too was subject to disease, decay and death. Time will spare no one. That temporality was a dire condition of existence, filled him with doubt as to the established structure and codes of human society. He renounced his kingdom and secretly passed out of the gates of the palace, leaving behind his young wife, a new-born son and his old father stricken with grief of separation. He went out to search for the secret that would free man from the clutches of time. To that end, he fasted and did penance, observed austerities and finally, seated under the famous Bo-tree; he saw the Light : he arrived at the conclusion that it was "desire" which bound man to Time. If he ceased to desire things of the temporal world, time would be helpless to torture the human soul. The Buddha (one who has found wisdom gave this conclusion an Intellectual and abstract form, known as the Four Truths and the Eight-fold Path. The recognition of the Four Truths and pursuit of the Eight-fold Path would lead one to *Nirvana*, freedom

from the temporal process of the *Sansara*, he thought.

In fact, the Buddha had not discovered anything which did not exist in the Hindu view of life. But he certainly introduced a formula for *Nirvana* which could be practised on a uniform and mass scale. While Hinduism had no promised gift to offer an organised society and left each individual to his own devices in order to find his own *Nirvana* through his own mode of *Nirvana*, Buddhism offered an amazingly simplified way to spiritual salvation. This simplification has always been the reason for a first-sight appeal of Buddhism to confused minds, ever since the Buddha started preaching his sermons. A Harvard Professor has described Buddhism, very understandably, as *cosmos* , comparing it to Hinduism which, according to him, is *chaos*. Hinduism does not prescribe any method. For, self-realization need not be a separate activity from the mode of life one has chosen for oneself. Self-realization is possible in whatever role one is cast in life. A detached, desireless action performed on any level is a way to self-realization. A Brahmin, through meditation and detached pursuit of knowledge; a Kshatriya, through detached action on the battlefield, if necessary, and by performing his administrative duties, is seeking self-realization as much as playing a role in his world. And this freedom of modes of self-realization is not confined to the traditional caste-roles. An artist, for example, by pursuing his art in a detached manner seeks self-realization. In fact, this belief and practice has inspired many great Indian musicians, including modern composers such as Ustad Allaudin, Ali Akbar Khan, Ravi Shankar to name a few among the most prominent masters, of our times.

So also in Eliot's *Four Quartets* : "History is now and England", and "With the drawing of this Love and the voice of this Calling".[4]

When this point is fully grasped, the reason why Buddhism could not flourish on its native soil and has exercised significantly less influence on the culture of India than even foreign religions like Christianity and Islam, is not far to seek. Also, this point could throw some light on the phenomenon of Buddhistic atmosphere in Western Literature round about the 1920s.

There are two very obvious reasons for Western thinkers' attraction toward Buddhism. Like Christianity and Islam, Buddhism is a historical religion. They all trace their origin to a

particular moment in human history. And like other historical religions, Buddhism serves the needs of an organised society. Most Western writers have based their thought on historical-universal assumptions; Hinduism does not place great reliance on the historical and Hindu Thought ivariably assumes an individual-historical base. A pattern related to the historical mode of comprehension ultimately derives its authenticity from the chronological apprehension of time. Simultaneity and totality of temporal experience, rather than time sequence and chronological arrangements of events, are major assumptions behind the Hindu perception of time. That is why, while objectivity is accepted as a cardinal virtue in Western thinking, in Hindu thinking it is detachment (involved observation, roughly speaking or active non-involvement) which is prized the most. Objectivity suggests a vantage point outside the orbit of a process; detachment signifies a point at the very centre of the process. A detached viewer is so fully involved and fully aware of all aspects of what is taking place around him and what is happening to himself as well that he is incapable of taking note of only one or the other aspect. He must relate rather than objectively separate aspects of his experience for a fuller understanding.

To bring these rather refracted generalizations to specific focii, we way turn to the works of two very important writers of our time, T. S. Eliot and Hermann Hesse.

In a letter dated March 13, 1922 Eliot wrote to Hesse :

Pendent un voyage recent dans la Suisse, j'ai fait la connaissance de votre 'Blick ins Chaos', pour lequel j'ai concu une grande admiration. Je trouve votre 'Blick ins Chaos' d'un serieux qui n'est pas encore arrive en Angleterre, et je voudrais en repandre la reputation.....[5] Eliot is also known to have made a pilgrimage to Montagnola to meet Hesse, in May 1922. This was the time when Hesse had completed his final revision of *Siddhartha* and Eliot had sent the blue-pencilled mansucript of *The Waste Land* to the press. The early interpreters of Hesse were entrapped by the title of the novel. Siddhartha was also the name of Gotama, before he became the Buddha. They took the novel as a reconstruction of the story of the Buddha. The vogue of Existentialism in the decades following the period between the two Wars, further helped them get deeper into the trap. As a matter of fact,

there is a point of irony involved in the interchangeability of the words "Buddha" (one who has gained wisdom or acquired wisdom or has become wise) and "Siddhartha" (one who has attained to his aim) and "Gotama" (one who has conquered his senses) in-as much-as Sidhartha according to the story told in the novel by Hesse, actually refuses to follow the Buddha and, in fact, leaves him behind. In chossing the Hindu name of the Buddha, as was given to him by his parents, Hesse knew what he was doing and tells us so in his own words :

Only recently have I been approaching the actual religious India of the gods, of Vishnu and Indra, Brahama and Krishna. And now Buddhism appears to me more and more as a kind of very pure, highly-bred reformation—a purification and spiritualization that has no flaw but its great zealousness, with which it destroys image-worlds for which it can offer no replacement.

(Coronoa, 3, 1962)[6]

Buddhism, like Existentialism in our own day, was born out of despair and disillusionment. The difference, however, was that in the case of the Buddha it was a disillusionment of a personal nature; in the case of the Existentialists it was a disillusionment caused by the industrial-urban environment or of historical nature. This point provides us with a key for comparing *The Waste Land* with *Four Quartets*. *The Waste Land* is a great historical poem which assumes a historical-universal base. The unity of World Culture is invoked through the images and the stumps of Time-Whether it is the mythic figure of Tiresias, or the picture of the Unreal City, or the spectre of the sunken Ganga and the black clouds gathered over Himavant, the landscape of *The Waste Land* remains enveloped in a twilight of the Buddhistic disillusionment : burning, burning, burning burning.

The Waste Land, not very unlike Buddhism, makes a moral judgement upon the historical state of the world :

Here is no water but only rock
Rock and no water and the sandy road
The road winding above among the mountains
Which are mountains of rock without water
If there were water we should stop and drink
Amongst the rock one cannot stop or think

Sweat is dry and feet are in the sand
If there were only water amongst the rock
Dead mountain mouth of carious teeth that cannot spit
Here one can neither stand nor lie nor sit
There is not even silence in the mountains
But dry sterile thunder without rain
There is not even solitude in the mountains
But red sullen faces sneer and snarl
From doors of mudcracked houses
If there were water[7]

And the spiritual answer to the historical attrition of *The Waste Land* is appropriately couched in ethical terms : "Datta" (Give), "Dayadhvam" (Sympathize), and "Damyata" (Control) *Four Quartets*, mainly written during the Second World War, are permeated with the spirit of "*SHANTIH SHANTIH SHANTIH*" and Eliot had no need of spelling the word out as he did in *The Waste Land* and Lord Buddha of *The Waste Land* yields place to Lord Krishna in the *Quartets*. Not that Eliot's concern with history has ceased; rather history has become an aspect of the timeless pattern; divested of its temporality, history becomes a pattern/of timeless moments" symbolic of Man's conscious effort to "conquer time through time." (This theme is more explicitly developed in Eliot's *Murder in the Cathedral*). Self-realization excludes nothing: it demands total awareness.

Q uick now, here, now always—
A condition of complete, simplicity
(Costing not less than everything)
And all shall be well and
All manner of thing shall be well
When the tongues of flame are in-folded
Into the crowned knot of fire
And the fire and the rose are one.[8]

The pragmatic and Buddhistic categories of *Sansara* and *Nirvana* have been overcome and the merger of *Atman* (finite soul or self) with *Parmatman*(the infinite soul) in the eternal or rather the timeless mome of Now, the merger of the temporal and the timeless,the only condition which the Hindu view of life, most explic-

itly stated in the Gita deems necessary and essential, irrespective of the many and diverse modes or ways of the realizing self, has b een sought :

> The river is within us, the sea is all about us;
> The sea is the land's edge also, the granite
> Into which reaches, the beaches where it tosses
> Its hints of earlier and other creation :
> .....
> The sea has many voices,
> Many gods and many voices.[9]

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R. S. Pathak

T. S. ELIOT'S *FOUR QUARTETS* AND THE BHAGAVADGITA : A STUDY IN ARCHETYPAL AFFINITIES

Northrop Frye has remarked that in the Eighteenth Century England "New contributions were pouring in from as far afield as Persia and India, and [that] Blake was among the first of European Idealists able to link his own tradition of thought with the Bhagavadgita."[1] Quite a few writers from both sides of the Atlantic have since turned to this great work for inspiration and ideas. Some of the most pronounced affinities with it are found in T. S. Eliot's later poetry and plays. For many of his recurrent motifs and archetypal images and symbols, Eliot is undoubtedly indebted to the Bhagavadgita (or the Gita, for short).[2] These affinities are particularly noticeable in his *Four Quartets*.

It was during his second stay at Harvard (1911-1914) that Eliot read Sanskrit and Pali and applied himself to the ancient classics of India. Blackmur conjectures that Eliot's interest in Indian philosophical works was enkindled by Professor Wood's course on Indian philosophy.[3] The two works that claimed his particular attention were Patanjali's *Mahabhasya* and the Gita. Of his two years' study of Oriental classics, he was engrossed for one 'year in the mazes of Patanjali's metaphysics', which left him 'in a state of enlightened mystification.'[4] His exposure to the Gita, however, seems to have been even more crucial. It is not for nothing that Eliot called it 'the greatest poem to the *Divine Comedy* within my experience.'[5] Eliot's philosophical gains might not have been very considerable, but his familiarity with Indian

thought went a long way towards shaping his mature sensibility. He responded to the Gita in more ways than one. It may be pointed out that even before composing the *Quartets*, he warmly praised, in an editorial written in the *Criterion*, 'a few highly civilized individuals such as Arjuna.'[6] The influence of the Gita and the *Upanisads* is frequently felt in the *Four Quartets*.

The *Four Quartets* have rightly been called Eliot's 'most challenging work.'[7] A good deal of this challenge originates from the fact in the *Quartets* we find layers of allusions and borrowings, images and symbols, which the poet has taken pains to neatly coalesce and present as integral parts of his work. It is surprising to note that this fact has sometimes been either totally ignored or given scant attention even by some reputed critics of Eliot's poetry. Helen Gardner, for example, is of the view that unlike those in *The Waste Land*, the sources in the *Quartets* are not of any real importance :

> In fact to read *Four Quartets* one must have some sense of the whole before one attempts to make very much of the parts. The sources are completely unimportant. No knowledge of the original context is required to give force to the new context. In *The Waste Land* the poet showed it was necessary to pay some regard to his sources by himself directing us to them.[8]

For a proper appreciation of a piece of poetry, as we know, some knowledge of its 'sources' is essential, whether the poet 'directs' us to them or not. This is all the more essential in the case of a work like the *Quartets*. As Eliot himself wrote in his introduction to Mark Wardle's translation of Valery's is *Le Serpent*, "One of the qualities of a genuine poet...is that in reading him we are reminded of remote predecessors, and in reading his remote predecessors we are reminded of him." This cross-referencing enriches one's response and makes one's study of a work far more meaningful.

Much of Eliot's excellent poetry relies to an unusually great extent on images and symbols. The success of the technique of the *Four Quartets* largely depends upon a multiplicity of allusions, accumulations and repetitions. Harry Blamiers has rightly drawn

our attention to what he calls "Eliot's allusiveness." He remarks :

> That echoing is as much an aspect of the poet's meaning as of his technique will be evident to anyone who has closely studied *Four Quartets*. The poem is *about* echoes; the poem *utilizes* echoes; the poem *is* echoes.

Referring to his allusions to Dante in *The Waste Land*, the poet confides that his intention in using them was "to present to the mind of the reader a parallel, by means of contrast."[10] This is what he does in the *Four Quartets*, too. He believed in the ability of the poetic mind to make comprehensive patterns out of scattered events. In a well-known essay he maintains that the poet's mind, unlike that of an ordinary man with his 'chaotic, irregular, fragmentary' experiences, 'is constantly amalgamating disparate experience' with a view to 'forming new wholes'.[11] This amalgamation is carried forward in Eliot's own case not only into the realm of ideas but also into the sphere of allusions, symbols and images.

Eliot's fascination of the Gita can be explained by taking into account his partiality for 'poetry with a clear philosophical pattern'. Although he would prefer a Christian and Catholic philosophy, he is able to enjoy 'that of Epicurus or of the Forest Philosophers of India'.[12] The poet was so deeply influenced by the Oriental classics that he once said that "Some of the early Buddhist scriptures affect me as parts of the Old Testament do."[13] This is also true of certain Hindu philosophical works such as the Gita and the *Upanisads*. These works came to Eliot's help whenever he was in need of fresh ideas and fresh symbols. Stephen Spender talks of 'the crisis of symbols' faced by modern poets,[14] to which even Eliot must not have been an exception. Paul Elmer More has presented Eliot as a 'lyric prophet of chaos', who reflects 'the confusion of life' through the flux of his imagery and symbols.[15] The tension-lacerated War must have brought to the poet's mind the allegory of the battlefield of the Gita.

It is true that the central theme of the *Four Quartets* is informed by Christianity, but the non-Christian elements in them have immensely contributed to their grandeur and meaning. The *Quartets* are less specifically Christian than any other work by

Eliot. Richard Lea, after comparing them to *Murder in the Cathedral*, comes to the conclusion that there is "greater depth, greater intensity, and greater beauty in these quartets, but less Christianity." "Is it possible", he asks, "that the level reached here is beyond Christianity ?"[16] The *Quartets* are the finest products of Eliot's mature poetic genius. In them the poet seems to be constantly striving towards evolving 'a faith for himself by integrating all that he has believed in or been attached to or even strongly interested in.'[17] The study of Oriental philosophy has left indelible marks on his poetry, and while going through the *Four Quartets*, we feel at times as if we are listening to faint chants of the Gita. It would be worth while to consider some of the archetypes that Eliot seems to have drawn from the Gita.

Eliot's use of symbols, both anthropological and religious, is remarkably fascinating. It may be recalled that the title of *The Waste Land* and 'the plan and a good deal of the incidental of the poem were suggested by Miss Jessie L. Weston's book on the Grail legend : *From Ritual to Romance* and that the poet was also indebted in general to Fraser's *Golden Bough*, 'another work of anthropology...which has influenced our generation profoundly'.[18] In the case of the *Four Quartets*, the treasure house seems to be the Gita and other Indian classics. The method followed here is the same, although in a limited way. *Burnt Norton*, for example, introduces the symbol of a lotus floating on the water of the empty pool :

> Dry the pool, dry concrete, brown edged,
> And the pool was filled with water out of sunlight,
> And the lotos rose, quietly, quietly,
> The surface glittered out of heart of light,
> The surface glittered out of heart of light,
> And they were behind us, reflected in the pool.

Commenting upon this use of 'lotos', Smidt opines that it is 'superficially incongruous in its context' and that 'its import may be phallic, but its Buddhist associations are far more immediate'. The lotus does not have any phallic connotation in Indian iconography. Realising this fact, Smidt hastens to add a corrective footnote : "In *Burnt Norton* it appears to be symbol of the complete reality of which sensible things (the concrete pool) are only

a part. This, of course, would attach it to Hinduism rather than to Buddhism."[19] David Perkins also believes that the lotus symbol here carries 'a more specifically sexual suggestion' and is reminiscent of 'the fabled lotus whose fruit made the eater forget his native country.'[20] These remarks are not correct. The critics do not take adequate account of the context and the poet's expressions. C. K. Stead is much more correct when he maintains that the lotus here is symbolic of 'the permanence of innocence.'[21] The lotus is a flower sacred to the Hindus. It represents a state of complete detachment and serenity. The Gita says :

> The lotus leaf rests unwetted on water:
> He [the yogin] rests on action, untouched by action.[22]

The lotus of *Burnt Norton* seems to have further associations. It is akin to the thousand-petalled lotus (*sahasrara*) of Indian *hathayoga*. The terms 'sunlight' and 'heart of light' in Eliot's poem confirm this interpretation. Lotus is a symbol of heart, while the sun represents blissful knowledge. Just as the rays of the sun falling on the lotus make it bloom, the human heart suffused with true knowledge attains bliss (*ananda*). Such a knowledge would be of inestimable value in this indocile world which is hardly better than 'the empty alley' or 'the drained pool.'

Eliot also refers to 'the moving tree' and its 'figured leaf.' There is a clear analogue to this tree in the Gita's Aswattha tree, which symbolizes the cosmos, the inconstant infinite :

> The giant Aswattha,
> The everlasting,
> Rooted in heaven,
> Its branches earthward:
> Each of its leaves
> Is a song of the Vedas,
> And he who knows it
> Knows all the Vedas.
>
> Downward and upward
> Its branches bending
> Are fed by the gunas,
> The buds it puts forth
> Are the things of the senses,

Roots it has also
Reaching downward
Into this world,
The roots of man's action.

It is extremely difficult to know the precise form and nature of this Aswattha tree. But this firmly rooted tree can be cut assunder only with the sharpened axe of non-attachment.[23] Eliot's 'moving tree' is not the 'Tree of Knowledge' of the Old Testament, which is mentioned as the 'wrath-bearing tree' of *Gerontion*. The 'garlic and sapphire in the mud' highlighted by Eliot in *Burnt Norton* stand for various aspects of the sensuous world surrounding us. An accurate awareness of this world and its ways and means is absolutely essential if we wish to move upward 'above the moving tree.'

In addition to the flower and tree symbols discussed above, the sea, river, fire and darkness from the elemental world also figure prominently in the *Quartets*. In the very beginning of *The Dry Salvages* the poet writes :

The river is within us, the sea is all about us;
The sea is the land's edge also, the granite
Into which it reaches, the beaches where it tosses
Its hints of earlier and other creation.

The sea here 'represents limitless time',[24] says Kristian Smidt. In Hindu mythology and elsewhere the sea is often a symbol of eternity. The sea in Eliot's poem tosses up curious things on its beaches and throws suggestions of 'earlier and other creation.' Eddies and whirlpools in it are a thousand shocks and caressings to which the flesh is heir. But the sea remains unruffled, steady and established. The Gita describes this state succinctly : "Even as rivers flow into the ocean which is full and unmoving."[25] The river, on the contrary, is 'sullen, untamed and intractable.../Useful, untrustworthy, as a conveyer of commerce.' Grover Smith comments : "Together the river and the sea allude to the Hindu parable of the life cycle."[26]

Fire is a major symbol in *Little Gidding*. The poet talks of the 'pentecostal fire' which glows 'more intense than blaze of qranch, or brazier.' "The 'refining fire' is the fire of divine love

and mercy in its disciplinary manifestations, whether as the burning pyre of sacrifice on which the selfish self is immolated, or as the purgatorial fiames which the unappeased spirit encountres hereafter."[27] Eliot says :

> The only hope, or else despair
> Lies in the choice of pyre or pyre—
> To be redeemed from fire by fire....
> We only live, only suspire
> Consumed by either fire or fire.

And finally :

> And all shall be well and
> All manner of thing shall be well
> When the tongues of flame are in-folded
> Into the crowned knot of fire
> And the fire and the rose are one.

This fire is different from the Buddhistic or Augustinian fire ('burning burning burning' of *The Waste Land*). The fire of lust ultimately becomes the fire of purgatory. The renunciatory and illuminating nature of fire has been variously mentioned in the *Vedas* and other Hindu scriptures.[28] In the Gita the practice of self-control has been described as the saccrificial fire, kindled by knowledge of God.[29] Talking about His true devotee, Lord Krishna :

> Flying from fear,
> From lust and anger,
> He bides in me
> His refuge, his safety:
> Burnt clean in the blaze of my being,
> In me many find home.[30]

In the same chapter of the Gita we come across the following powerful simile :

> The blazing fire turns wood to ashes:
> The fire of knowledge turns all karmas to ashes.[31]

It may also be noted that in later chapters fire is equated with God himself. Lord Krishna describes himself as 'the light of the

fire', 'the oblation and the flame into which it is offered', and 'fire, world-wide, supreme, primeval'.[32] Eliot probably took some of his hints from the Gita's concept of fire.

Darkness has been given various meanings in different philosophical systems. In the Gita it has been used in two diametrically opposite senses. In one sense it is equated with 'the dark of Maya', ignorance :

> The light is covered by darkness:
> This darkness is delusion:
> That is why we dream.

Darkness, in this common sense, is in complementary distribution with light—the radiance of the pure Soul. There is, however, a more characteristic connotation given to it. The 'darkness of soul' is made most of by the illumined, God-realised ones :

> The recollected mind is awake
> In the knowledge of the Atman
> Which is dark night to the ignorant:
> The ignorant are awake in their sense-life
> Which they think is daylight
> To the seer it is darkness.[33]

Eliot's treatment of darkness reads like a paraphrase of the second sense of darkness in the Gita. The poet is all for 'further union, a deeper communion/Through the dark cold and the empty desolation'. He writes elsewhere :

> Descend lower, descend only
> Into the world of perpetual solitude,
> World not world, but that which is not world,
> Internal darkness, deprivation
> And destitution of all property,
> Desiccation of the world of sense,
> ...while the world moves
> In appetency, on its metalled ways
> Of time past and time future.

The darkness lauded in these lines is not the darkness in its gross sense. It is the 'darkness to purify the soul/Emptying the sensual

with deprivation/Cleansing affection from the temporal'. It is in this 'darkness of the soul' that the greatest intellectual and spiritual attainments are possible. The hopeful darkness mentioned by Eliot is, in fact, a mystic state—'a state of enlightened mystification', which he himself felt at Harvard after going through the mazes of Hindu metaphysics :

> I said to my soul, be still, and let the dark come upon you
> Which shall be the darkness of God.

'The darkness,' says the poet in *Murder in the Cathedral*, 'declares the glory of light'. He adds in *East Coker* that it can descend only 'when, under ether, the mind is conscious but conscious of nothing'. The following lines from *The Illuminative Way* would unfold the nature of it clearly :

> This tranquility and repose in God is not all darkness to the soul, as the dark night is, but rather tranquility and repose in the divine light and in a new knowledge of God, whereby the mind, most sweetly tranquil, is raised to a divine light.[34]

St. John of the Cross's writings did influence Eliot's thought before *Sweeney Agnostes*. But the immediate source for his concept of the dark night of the soul, as enunciated in Section III of *Burnt Norton*, is to be found in Indian philosophy, especially in the Gita's way of contemplation by voiding the mind of everything except faith. It also recalls to our mind the doctrine of the Ultimate Void of the *Vedas*. The 'disaffection' of *Burnt Norton* is akin to the darkness described in the Gita.

Yet other important symbols used by Eliot in the *Quartets* are the wheel and the point. The imagery of wheel is common to Hindu thought. The Gita holds that God is 'the unmoved and the moving'.[35] All other things and people in this world are subject to change :

> Maya makes all things: what moves, what is unmoving.
> O son of Kunti, that is why the world spins,
> Turning its wheel through birth
> And through destruction.[36]

Again, it refers to 'the wheel of birth and death'.[37] Although Eliot did not subscribe to the Indian theory of reincarnation, we come across ideas which can be placed alongside of those of the Gita. The poet in *East Coker* points to 'the agony/Of death and birth'. As we grow older, life and its pattern tend to become all the more complex : 'As we grow older/The world becomes stranger, the pattern more complicated/Of dead and living'. He feels that 'a lifetime burning in every moment' can provide solution to the problem. From a philosophical point of view the birth and the death are intricately related to each other. The poet maintains in *Little Gidding* that 'the end of all our exploring/Will be to arrive where we started'. For his 'turning wheel' symbol, Eliot is drawing upon the Gita. The wheel of life has got to move; this is the law of nature. Eliot reiterates in his *Murder in the Cathedral* :

> For ill or good, let the wheel turn.
> For who knows the end of good or evil ?
> Until the grinders cease
> And the door shall be shut in the street.

To those who 'do not wish anything to happen' and who go on 'living and partly living', Thomas admonishes that :

> ...all must suffer that they may will it,
> That the pattern may subsist, for the pattern is the action
> And the suffering, that the wheel may turn and still
> Be forever still.

The wheel of life would move only when propelled by action. Echoing the Gita, Eliot writes in *Burnt Norton* that we pursue the pattern :

> At the still point of the turning world. Neither flesh nor fleshless;
> Neither from nor towards; at the still point, there the dance is,
> But neither arrest nor movement. And do not call it fixity,
> Where past and future are gathered.

The above discussion, though sketchy and brief, leads us on to many significant aspects of Eliot's poetry. The poet's paradoxical and cyclic concept of time has been a source of baffling analyses. Towards the end of the very first section of *Burnt Norton*, we are told :

> Time past and time future
> What might have been and what has been
> Point to one end, which is always present.

Time-sense is, really, a matter of the perceiver's consciousness. As Whorf points out, "if we inspect consciousness we find no past, present, future, but a unity embracing complexity. Everything is in consciousness, and everything in consciousness *is*, and is together."[38] It is in this sense that statements like 'all time is eternally present' and 'Only through time time is conqured' acquire meaning. It is, again, in this context that time and timeless can intersect. Time as apprehended by a saint is of a different order and is on a different plane—different from the common man's perception of time :

> ...to apprehend
> The point of intersection of the timeless
> With time, is an occupation for the saint—
> No occupation either, but something given
> And taken, in lifetime's death in love,
> Ardour and selflessness and self-surrender.

'The still point', which Eliot mentions more than once, is thus not possible to be perceived by everyone. Maxwell comments: "Within the still point is implied movement, as by the movement of innumerable atoms is composed the stability of objects."[39] The experience of 'the still point' can be described as the penetration of time by eternity. Eliot was intrigued by the Bergsonian conception of time as '*duree*' with its annihilation of the barriers between present, past and future. His preoccupation with time (and eternity) led him to conclude that 'All time is unredeemable'. Morris Weitz argues that Eliot's conception of time is 'a repudiation of the Heraclitean with its inistence upon the ultimate character of time as flux (or pure *duree*)'.[40] In that case, Eliot might have taken the hints from the Gita and other Indian works,

"I am the beginning", says Lord Krishna in the Gita, "the middle and the end in creation....I am Time without end : I am the Sustainer; my face is everywhere."[41] Only God is 'birthless and deathless.'[42] Eliot's concept of time seems to have been suggested by the Vedantic dotrine of 'wholism.'[43] Huxley once said : 'Time must have a stop.' Eliot has provided a mystic solution, like that of Indian sages, to this problem ; To be conscious is not to be in time.'

Eliot's conception of time both as the destroyer and the preserver also brings to our mind the Hindu view according to which Siva the Destroyer and Visnu the Preserver are reconciled in the singleness of God (Brahma). In the Gita God is described as 'Life eternal and death' not only 'the place of abode, the beginning, the friend and the refuge' but also 'the breaking-apart, and the storehouse of life's dissolution.'[44] Eliot's phrase, Blamiers holds, "echoes Shelley's *Ode to the West Wind*, 'Destroyer and Preserver'".[45] At this point of his creative career Eliot was not to be satisfied by a phrase or tag from a poem. He would hold on to something more stable and dependable.

Every moment is the time of death ('And the time of death is every moment', says Eliot) and the realization of this fact is an integral part of human consciousness. In the *Four Quartets* the 'travellers' who start on a journey are asked to meditate during their journey upon Krishna's words to Arjuna concerning reincarnation, for :

> ...on whatever sphere of being
> The mind of a man may be intent
> At the time of death—that is the one action
> (And the time of death is every moment)
> Which shall fructify in the lives of others.

In the Gita Lord Krishna tells Arjuna that the man at death goes to that sphere of being on which his mind is then intent :

> At the hour of death, when a man leaves his body, he must depart with his consciousness absorbed in me. Then he will be united with me. Be certain of that. Whatever a man remembers at the last, when he is leaving the body, will be realized by him in the hereafter;

> because that will be what his mind has most constantly dwelt on, during this life.
>
> Therefore you must remember me at all times, and do your duty. If your mind and heart are set upon me constantly, you will come to me. Never doubt this.[46]

This is yet another proof of the fact that Eliot was variously indebted to the Gita.

The mention of Lord Krishna in the third section of *The Dry Salvages* makes it plainly evident that while composing the *Quartets*, Eliot was invariably remembering the Gita and its central figure, Krishna. He 'sometimes wonders if that is what Krishna meant' ! Krishna here is not so much an individual as an archetype par excellence. One of the most essential principles underlying archetypal patterns is that "the individual and the universal forms of an image are identical."[47] Helen Gardner thinks that the introduction of Krishna in the third section of *The Dry Salvages* is an 'error' and that it 'destroys the poem's imaginative harmony.'[48] This section, according to Davie, is 'rather a bad poem', which sticks out among the rest 'like a sore thumb.'[49] These critics, however, tend to forget the real purpose of the poem. The reference to Krishna, Ward rightly points out, indicate, "the One-ness of meaning which may resolve the many-ness of human experience."[50] Moreover, as said earlier, Eliot realized the potential of Krishna as a powerful archetype and made use of it without any qualms. Krishna represents the accumulated wisdom and power of primeval forces and also the perfection to which human beings can reach. He is the superman and the king of *yogins* (*yogiraja*)—the one who puts his own principles to practice in his own life and actions.

Lord Krishna advises Arjuna, the representative man, who is called upon to face the strife of life and, beset by doubts and uncertainties, passions and prejudices, hesitates to fight. Explaining the nature of reality, he tells Arjuna :

> That which is non-existent can never come into being, and that which is can never cease to be. Those who

have known the inmost Reality know also the nature of *is* and *is not*.

That Reality which pervades the universe is indestructible. No one has power to change the Changeless.[51]

A correct knowledge of the relative world and the reality pervading it is a fundamental prerequisite of insight into God and His ways. But there is a rub: 'Human kind', as Eliot complains, 'Cannot bear very much reality.' Krishna had to show His 'Shape Stupendous' (*visvarupa*) to Arjuna to dispel his misgivings. His Divine Form contained 'the whole universe with all things animate and inert made one' within His body; it possessed 'splendour/ Brilliant like the sun; like fire, blazing, boundless.'[52] He is described by Arjuna as 'Prime Cause of all' and 'Form of fire, world-wide, supreme, primeval.'[53] But human eyes cannot afford to look at a sight like this. Therefore, Krishna says to Arjuna : "But you cannot see me thus with those human eyes. Therefore, I give you divine sight."[54] Eliot's pronouncement is, obviously, based on Krishna's observation.

Moreover, Eliot's philosophy of life revealed in the *Four Quartets* closely resembles the one contained in the Gita. Krishna exhorts Arjuna to acquire disinterestedness. The advice coincides with Eliot's warning against living for the future and justifying actions according to their results. Thomas in *Murder in the Cathedral* comments : 'You argue by results, as this world does'. 'For us, the poor, there is no action/But only to wait and to witness'. Thomas himself affirms that action is suffering/And suffering is action.' The value of right, selfless action has been maintained by Eliot in *The Dry Salvages* also :

Here the past and future
Are conquered, and reconciled,
Where action were otherwise movement
Of that which is only moved...
Driven by daemonic, chthonic
Powers. And right action is freedom
From past and future also.
For most of us, this is the aim
Never here to be realised;

Who are only undefeated
Because we have gone on trying.

This orchestral invocation to the precept of detached action makes a direct reference to the Gita's well-known philosophy of selfless action. Emphasizing the value of the yoga of right action (*karmayoga*) Lord Krishna remarks :

> You have the right to work, but for the work's sake only. You have no right to the fruits of work. Desire for the fruits of work must never be your motive in working. Never give way to laziness, either.[55]

He urges Arjuna to pursue the course of right action, for "Freedom from activity is never achieved by abstaining from action. Nobody can become perfect by merely ceasing to act. Nobody can, in fact, ever rest from his activity even for a moment. All are helplessly forced to act by the *gunas*."[56] Krishna further says that 'freedom' can be attained either by renouncing actions rightly or by performing them with a truly detached mind. Either of the two courses is far better than mere shunning of action.[57] In a comprehensive sense, there is no duality between knowledge and action :

> The wise see knowledge and action as one:
> They see truly.
> Take either path
> And tread it to the end:
> The end is the same.
> There the followers of action
> Meet the seekers after knowledge
> In equal freedom.[58]

It is this 'freedom' from action that Eliot talks of in the lines cited above : "And right action is freedom/From past and future also." The following lines from Kierkegaard would further sharpen our perception of such a person :

> The man is not freed from responsibilities; he has exchanged the torment of the finite, pursuit of effects, for the motive power of the infinite....He will have to

> practise till death itself decision in the depth of spontaneity, unruffled decision, made ever anew to 'right action'. Then action is not empty but purposive, enjoined, needed part of creation, but this action is no longer imposed upon the world, it grows in it as if it were non-action.

The philosophy of right action properly pursued enables one to acquire the attitude of the *sthitiprajna*, i.e. mental equipoise. A *sthitiprajna* is one who has superbly risen above the dualities of nature, is poised in heat and cold, success and failure. The Gita says : "Realize that pleasure and pain, gain and loss, victory and defeat, are all one and the same."[59] Advocating this attitude again and again, it advises : "You must be free from the pairs of opposites. Poise your mind in tranquility."[60] In *East Coker* Eliot refers to the same quality :

> There is only the fight to recover what has been lost
> And found and lost again and again; and now, under conditions
> That seem unpropitious. But perhaps neither again nor loss.
> For us, there is only the trying. The rest is not our business.

With this attitude, the doer does his duty 'with no before and after'. The analogy between the teachings of the Gita and certain lines of *The Dry Salvages* also are noteworthy :

> At the moment which is not of action or inaction
> ...that is the one action...
> Which shall fructify in the life of others.

The characteristic nature of a truly detached person has been discussed in detail in the Gita. Eliot has given 'only hints and guesses,/Hints followed by guesses'. For elaborations one will have to go to the Gita :

> He is no longer swayed by joy and envy, anxiety and fear....He is pure, and independent of the body's desire. He is able to deal with the unexpected ; prepared for

> everything,unperturbed by anything. He is neither vain nor anxious about the results of his actions....He does not desire or rejoice in what is pleasant. He does not dread what is unpleasant, or grieve over it. He remains unmoved by good or evil fortune....His attitude is the same toward friend and foe. He is indifferent to honour and insult, heat and cold, pleasure and pain. He is free from attachment. He values praise and blame equally.... His home is everywhere and nowhere.[61]

The doctrine of selfless action is advocated in *The Dry Salvages* as the sure basis of self-seeking. While talking to his voyagers, Eliot is said to be using two voices, i.e. the assumptions of the travellers in F.H. Bradley's *Appearance and Reality*, and Krishna's persuasion to Arjuna.[62] Bradley's echo is distinctly heard in the first voice's challenge to the travellers to declare their personal indentity: 'You are not those who saw the harbour/Receding, or those who will disembark'. They are, ultimately, guided to heed Krishna :

> And do not think of the fruit of action.
> Fare forward.
> ...So Krishna, as when he admonished Arjuna
> On the field of battle.
> Not fare well,
> But fare forward, voyagers.

It would not need any expert inquiry to maintain that for the above ideas Eliot is undoubtedly indebted to the Gita. The explicit mention of the names of Krishna and Arjuna leaves not a shade of doubt that the poet was endorsing the philosophy contained in the Gita. So deeply imbued was his mind with ideas from this great work that one can cite a number of parallels even in respect of stray ideas between the *Four Quartets* and the Gita. A couple of examples will suffice. In an attitude of non-attachment, says Eliot, one can view the 'cargo of dead negroes, cows and chicken coops' to be of equal worth. This thought recalls the following verse of the Gita :

> Seeing all things equal,
> The enlightened may look

> everything,unperturbed by anything. He is neither vain nor anxious about the results of his actions....He does not desire or rejoice in what is pleasant. He does not dread what is unpleasant, or grieve over it. He remains unmoved by good or evil fortune....His attitude is the same toward friend and foe. He is indifferent to honour and insult, heat and cold, pleasure and pain. He is free from attachment. He values praise and blame equally.... His home is everywhere and nowhere.[61]

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> Seeing all things equal,
> The enlightened may look

On the Brahmin, learned and gentle,
On the cow, on the elephant,
On the dog, on the eater of dogs.[63]

If a person binds himself with wordly pleasures, he is in for all sorts of problems. Eliot warns us, in *The Waste Land*, against doubt and uncertainty', which he refers to as 'merely a variety of belief'. By the time he composed *The Rock* the poet came to write :

All our knowledge brings us nearer to our ignorance,
All our ignorance brings us nearer to death...
Where is the wisdom we have lost in knowing ?
Where is the knowledge we have lost in information ?

The *Quartets* seek to provide answers to some of these questions. The Gita presents the cycle of misfortunes more succinctly :

Thinking about sense-objects
Will attach you to sense-objects;
Grow attached, and you become addicted;
Thwart your addiction, it turns to anger;
Be angry, and you confuse your mind;
Confuse your mind, you forget the lesson of experience;
Forget experience, you lose discrimination;
Lose discrimination, and you miss life's only purpose.[64]

The attitude to sin revealed in the *Quartets* and the Gita also bears a marked resemblance. 'Sin is Behovely,' writes Eliot, and 'From wrong to wrong the exasperated spirit/Proceeds, unless restored by that refining fire'. He was conscious of this eternal dilemma, this 'dark night' of sin originating from 'the cloud of unknowing'. Like his own Dame Julian, the poet was "much troubled by the thought of the origin of sin in a world created by infinite Goodness." He would not have disapproved the panacea suggested in the Gita by Lord Krishna :

Lay down all duties
In me, your refuge.
Fear no longer,
For I will save you
From sin and from bondage.[65]

Finally, what is even more significant to note is the striking similarity between the mythic archetypes and typological divisions of people in the Gita and the *Quartets*. The former divides humanity on the basis of people's physical, mental and spiritual qualities. These types have been given in Chapters XVI, XVII and XVIII of the Gita. These qualities (*gunas*) represent different stages of a particular entity's evolution. Lord Krishna represents the Primal Man, the *purusa* of the *Rgveda*. A hierarchical ordering has been fixed in the Gita even between various faculties of man. "Exalted are the senses, or so they say; higher than the senses is the mind; yet higher than the mind is the soul; and what is beyond the soul is self."[66] Human beings have been classified in the Gita, in accordance with their innate characteristics, into three classes : the divine (dominated by *sat*), the passionate (imbued with *rajas*), and the demonical (controlled by *tamas*). The three binding bonds are described in the following way :

Sattwa the shining
Can show the Atman
By its pure light:
Yet sattwa will bind you
To search for happiness,
Longing for knowledge.

Rajas the passionate
Will make you thirsty
For pleasure and possession:
Rajas will bind you
To hunger for action.

Tamas the ignorant
Bewilders all men:
Tamas will bind you
With bonds of delusion
Sluggishness, stupor.[67]

Eliot's categorization of human beings largely corresponds to that of the Gita. At the lowest level are the men with 'The trilling wire in the blood' who are represented as 'Garlic and sapphire in the mud/Clot the bedded axle-tree'. Such persons have 'unwholesome lungs' and 'unhealthy souls' and are

Distracted from distraction by distraction
Filled with fancies and empty of meaning
Tumid apathy with no concentration.

In the second category the poet would keep men characterized by 'the general mess of imprecision of feeling,/Undisciplined squads of emotions ? These fickle-minded 'Creatures of summer heat' are always beset by the 'fear of fear and folly' and are 'Caught in the form of limitation/Between un-being and being'. Despite all their 'voluptuary sweetness', they are hardly better than 'a broken king'. At the highest rung, the poet has kept those few people who are free from 'the enigma of fever chart'. They are superbly immune to 'The dance along the artery' and 'the circulation of the lymph'. They go on to acquire :

The inner freedom from the practical desire,
The release from action and suffering, release from the inner
And the outer compulsion, yet surrounded
By a grace of sense, a white light still and moving,
Erhebung without motion, concentration
Without elimination.

The saintly persons belonging to this last category, however, are far and few between. Their virtues include : 'endless' humility, ignorance' dispossession, 'complete simplicty/(Costing not less than everything)', forgiveness for 'Both and good', unassailable faith and 'calm, the autumnal serenity/And the wisdom of age'. In *The Waste Land* these virtues are subsumed under '*Datta, dayadhvan, damyata*' (Give, sympathise, control), their immediate source being the *Brhadaranyaka Upanisad.* All these qualities generate in a man the spirit of true renunciation and reconciliation : "And the way up is the way down, the way forward is the way back." To one endowed with this beatific vision, 'the fire and the rose are one' and 'the moment of the rose and the moment of the yew-tree/Are of equal duration'. It is only such men who enjoy true peace, *santih*—the upanisadic tranquility, described by Eliot as 'The Peace which passeth understanding.'[68] The three kinds of people and their characteristics have been discussed beautifully in the Gita. Like the *Quartets*, it believes in

the evolution of human nature, The journey from the demonic to the divine is arduous, but not inconceivable. R. C. Zaehner rightly points out, "In the Gita self-realization which means the felt experience of the self as a timeless monad and particle of God, is the result of the absorption of all the powers of the human personality into the self; they are not destroyed but fused into a unity."[69] The unity and disintegration of the three archetypal characters mentioned in the Gita also served as the basis of classifications of humanity in Blake and Whitman. In *The Marriage of Heaven and Hell*, Blake divided the human personality into 'The head Sublime, the heart Pathos, the genitals Beauty, the hands and feet Proportion.' Whitman appropriated these universal qualities on to himself in *Song of Myself*. His sensual man, 'gaunt and grim, with well-grey'd hair, and flesh all sunken about the eyes', a Spring figure symbolized by the child bubbling with passion and curiosity, and the Strong Man, 'very calm, as of beautiful yellow-white ivory', like Eliot's, were ispired by the Gita's classifications.

Eliot has thus taken many of his ideas and symbols in the *Four Quartets* from the Gita. It has been said that he has not always succeeded in synthesizing Hindu and Heraclitean elements in his work. Rajan is of the view that this dualism originates from the 'unbridgeable gap' between Christianity and Hinduism.[70] Eliot has, however, tried to present his ideas as integratively as possible. He had, towards his mature creative period, glimpses of 'the pattern [that] may subsist', which he struggled to 'unweave, unwind, unravel/And piece together.' He found the Gita immensely helpful to him in unfolding this 'pattern'. Any duality that might have lurked there is confined to superficial details and is not of much gravity. Moreover, as *The Catholic Encyclopedia* comments, "Dualism leaves room for faith, and hands over to faith many of the problems which philosophy cannot solve." To realize the seriousness of Eliot's intentions, one should compare his efforts with those of writers like Somerset Maugham whose interest in Indian philosophy seems to be nothing more than a tribute to the fashion of the moment. The final impression that the *Four Quartets* leave upon our mind is that of a scholarly work produced by a liberal-minded religious poet. Grover Smith calls them 'a new *Essay on Man*...the poetic jottings of a philosophy holding that the world is an organ of the divine purpose."[71] The

poet's intentions are very clear in the *Quartets*. "The poetry does not matter," writes the poet. "It was not...what one had expected." The philosophical gains of his reading the Gita may not have been very great, but the poetic gains are considerable. The ideas and symbols taken over from it have gone a long way to make the *Four Quartets* a great work.

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2. Archetypes are dynamic instinctual complexes—eternal lineaments which have implanted themselves upon the memory of the human race. Jung calls them 'dominants' of the Unconscious. The term 'archetype' has been used here io the sense in which it is used by Northrop Frye. He remarks : "I mean by an archetype a symbol which connects one poem with another and thereby helps to unify and integrate our literary experience." *Anatomy of Criticism* (Princeton, 1973), p. 99. In another book, *T. S. Eliot* (London, 1963), Frye has tried to relate the *Four Quartets* to the archetypal patterns and transformations in the whole body of Eliot's poetry and plays. But the issue taken up in the present paper has received no attention.

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20. David Perkins, "Rose-garden to Midwinter Spring : Achieved Faith in the *Four Quartets*", in Bergonzi (ed.), p. 255.

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22. brahmanyadhaya karmani sangam tyaktva karoti yah/
lipyate na sa papena padmapatramivambhasa/

V. 10.

The translation of the verses of the *Gita* given in the paper are from Swami Prabhavananda and Christopher Isherwood, *The Song of God : Bhagavad-Gita* (New York : The New American Library, 1954).

23. urdhvamulam adhahsakham asvattham prahur avyayam/
chandansi yasya parnani yas tam veda sa vedavit/
adhascordhvam prasrtas tasya sakha
gunapravradha visayapravalah/
adhasca mulanyanusantatani
karmanuvandhini manusyaloke/
na rupamasyeha tathopalabhyate
nanto na cadirna ca sampratistha/
asvatthamenam suvirudhamulam
asangasastrena drdhena chittva/

XV. 1-3.

24. Smidt, *op. cit.*, p. 157.

25. apurvamanam acalapratistham
samudramapah yravisanti yadvat/
tadvatkama yam pravisanti sarve
sa srntimapnoti na kamakami/

26. G. C. Smith, *T. S. Eliot's Poetry and Plays* (Chicago, 1956), p. 278.

27. Blamiers, *op. cit.*, p. 156.

28. See P. Achuthan, *Vedantic Lore in the Poetry of T. S. Eliot*, p. 249.

29. sarvanindriyakarmani pranakarmani capare/
atmasanyamayogagnau juhvati jnanadipite/

IV. 27.

30. vitaragabhayakrodha manmana mam upasritah/
vahavo jnanatapasa puta madbhavamagatah/

IV. 10.

31. yathaidhansi samiddho 'gnir bhasmasat kurute' rjuna/
jnanagnih sarvakarmani bhasmasat kurute tatha/

IV. 37.

32. See VII, 9; IX. 16; XI. 47.

33. ya nisa sarvabhutanam tasyam jagarti sanyami/
yasyam jagarti bhutani sa nisa pasyato muneh/

II. 69.

34. R. H. J. Steuart (ed.), *The Mystical Doctrine of St. John of the Cross* (London, 1948). p. 159.

35. XI, 43.

36. mayadhyaksena prakritih suvate sacaracaram/
hetunanena kaunteya jagad viparivartate/

IX. 10.

37. XVI. 20.

38. Benjamin L. Whorf, *Language, Thought and Reality* (Cambridge, Mas.), pp. 143-44.

39. D. E. S. Maxwell, *The Poetry of T. S. Eliot* (London, 1960), p. 24.

40. Morris Weitz, "T. S. Eliot : Time as a Mode of Salvation", in Bergonzi (ed.), p. 139.

41. sarganam adirantasca madhyam caivaham arjuna/
\+ + +
ahamevaksayah kalo dhataham visvatomukhah/

X. 31-32.

42. anadimadhyantamanantaviryam.

XI. 19.

43. Cf. *Mandukya Upanisad* : 'The past, the present and the future - all this is only the syllable *Aum*. And whatever also there is that transcends the threefold time that too is only *Aum*. *Isavasyopanisad*: 'What sorrow, what delusion, can there be to him who has perceived this oneness' ?

44. IX. 19, 18.

45. Blamiers, *op. cit.*, p. 99.

46. yam yam vapi smaranbhavam tyajatyante kalevaram/
tam tamevaiti kaunteya sada tadbhavabhvitah/
tasmatsarvesu kalesu mamanusmara yudhya ca/
mayyarpitamanobuddhir mamevaisyasyasansayam/

VIII. 6-7.

47. W. J. Handy and M. Westbrook (eds.), *Twentieth Century Criticism; The Major Statements* (Indian rpt.; New Delhi, 1947), p. 242.

48. Rajan (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 69.

49. Kenner (ed.), *op. cit.*, p. 192.

50. David Ward, *T. S. Eliot Between Two Worlds*, p. 260.

51. nasato vidyate bhavo nabhavo vidyate satah/
ubhayorapi drsto' ntastvanayos tattvadarsibhih/
avinasi tu tad vipdhi yena sarvamidam tatam/
vinasamavyayasyasya na kascit kartum arhati/

II. 16-17.

52. XI. 7; XI. 17.

53. XI. 37; XI. 47.

54. na tu mam sakyase drastumanenaiva svacaksusa/
divyam dadami te caksuh pasya me yogamaisvaram/

XI. 8.

55. karmanyevadhikaraste ma phalesu kadacana /
ma karmaphalaheturbhvrma sango'stvakarmani/

II. 47.

56. na karmanamanarambhanniskarmyam puruso' snute/
na ca samnyasanadeva sidhim samadhigacchati/
III. 4.

57. V. 2.
58. V. 4.
59. sukhaduhkhe same krtva labhalabhau jayajayau/
tato yudhaya yujyasva naivam papamavapsyasi/
II. 38.

60. II. 45.
61. yo na krsyati na dvesti na sociati na kanksati/
subhasubhaparityagi bhaktimanyah sa me priyah/
samah satrau ca mitre ca tatha manapamanayoh/
sitosnasukhaduhkhesu samah sangavivarjitah/
XII. 17-18.

62. Bergonzi (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 219-20.
63. vidyavinayasampanne brahmane gavi hastini/
suni caiva svapake ca panditah samadarsinah/
V. 18.

64. dhyayato visayan punsah sangastesupajayate/
sangatsanjayate kamah kamatkrodho' bhijayate/
krodhad bhavati sammohah sammohat smrtivibhamah/
smrtibhransad buddhinaso buddhinasat pranasyati/
II. 62-63.

65. sarvadharman parityajya mamekam saranam braja/
aham tva sarvapapebhyo moksayisyami ma sucah/
66. III. 42.
67. tatra sattvam nirmalatvat prakasakamanamayam/
sukhasangena badhnati jnanasangena canagha
rajo ragatmakam viddhi trsnasangasamudbhavam/
tannibadhnati kaunteva karmasangena dehinam/
tamastvajnanajam viddhi mohanam sarvadehinam/
pramadalasyanidrabhistannibadhnati bharata/
XIV. 6-8.

68. Eliot, 'Notes on The Waste Land', *The Complete Poems and Plays*, p. 80.
69. R. C. Zaehner (ed.), *The Bhagavadgita* (OUP, 1975), p. 11.
70. Rajan (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 69-70.
71. Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 297.

Gupteshwar Prasad

FOUR QUARTETS AND THE BHAGAVADGITA

About 1943, Eliot wrote his famous poem 'Four Quartets' and also his lesser known poem 'To the Indians who died in Africa' the latter dedicated to Bonamy Dobree, the eminent English critic who wanted to preserve it; Both the poems bear the stamp of the influence of the Bhagavadgita on Eliot's philosophical speculations. The last stanza of the poem 'To the Indians who died in Africa' runs as follows :

> Let those who go home tell the same story of you :
> Of action with a common purpose, action
> None the less fruitful if neither you nor we
> Know, until the judgment after death,
> What is the fruit of action.[1]

The question of action and its fruit was the chief concern of Eliot at that time which became the major theme of his poem 'Four Quartets'. The intention of this paper is to bring out how and in what circumstance and to what extent Eliot was influenced by the philosophy of the Gita in so far as his poem 'Four Quartets' is concerned.

Oriental influence on Eliot is sometimes overemphasised forgetting the fact that mere citing of *Data, Dayadhvam, Damyata, Shantih, Shantih, Shantih*' at the end of the poem 'The Waste Land' is no evidence of the fact that Eloit was knowledgeable about Indian scriptures and it is almost certain that he had not come in contact with Indian poetics at all. This is, however, not to rule out the possibility of the influence of the Bhagavadgita on Eliot's thoughts. It is probable that Sir Edwin Arnold's excellent

translation of the Gita, *The Song Celestial*, might have been available to Eliot as it might have been available to Yeats, Huxley or as it was available to Ghandijee who knew little Sanskrit as he himself admitted in his autobiography *My Experiments With Truth*. But why should Eliot be introduced to this Divine book through Edwin Arnold when he had more than workable knowledge of Sanskrit language ? Stephen Spender observes that after his return from Paris in 1911, Eiiot was admitted to the Harvard University where he read Sanskrit, Pali and Indian Philosophy.[2] This was the period when he also got interested in F. H. Bradley's philosophy on which he later wrote his full-length doctoral dissertation entitled *Knowledge and Experience in the Philosophy of F. H. Bradley* and got the award. While Bradley made him capable of coherent and systematic thinking, the Gita dispelled many of his doubts and confusions by which he was assailed earlier and also removed his scepticism and revived his faith in God and His ways. At the time, Eliot began to make a close study of the Gita, step by step, as he went on, he was overwhelmed with its transcendent sublimity and he found the light which he yearned in Christanity. The spirit of the Gita pierced into his very marrow and he felt himself transported into a new world over which peace unfathomable brooded in silence and serenity. There was a complete transformation of his personality. All the searchings of his spirit ceased and his soul, finding its abode, was ever more at rest. He bade adieu to all his new-fangled ways and all proved to be but the beginning of a keen struggle which stirred his being to its depths and out of which he emerged into a realised-soul. He sustained his interest in the Gita all through. In his essay on 'Dante', he acknowledged the Bhagavad-Gita as the next greatest philosophical poem to the *Divine Comedy*. Bonamy Dobree in a personal reminiscence indicates how when a certain gentleman mentioned the Bhagvad-Gita before Eliot, the latter in an exultant mood immediataly enquired of him : "O ! have you read the Bhagvad-Gita ?"[3] There are proofs to show that Eliot had read the Gita, nor half-heartedly, but seriously and had grasped its deeper philosophy and had absorbed it and had practised it in his personal life. While he became almost a Buddhist when he was writing 'The Waste Land', he became a Vedantic and a mystic when he came to write 'Four Quartets'.

While Eliot was writing 'The Waste Land', his position was

no different from that of Arjuna in the first *Visada Yoga* chapter of the Gita in which he is described almost on the brink of collapsing. The scene of the battlefield sends a tremor to his fear-stricken heart. The author of the Gita puts the following lamentation in the mouth of Arjuna :

> I do not wish for victory, Krishna ! Nor do I desire kingdom and happiness. What will empire and enjoyments avail if I have to kill those very persons for whose sake I want these. Teachers, parents, sons, grandparents, uncles, relations by marriage, and all kinsfolk shall have to be killed and I will not kill them even for the possession of the whole world.[4]

The picture is unrelieved in the entire range of descriptions in Sanskrit literature. Arjuna is invalidated aad he stands nonplused, as it were, in a state of inertia, with his skin burning and his *Gandiva* gliding from his arms.[5] It is memorable that Arjuna was the arch-hero of the battle of *Uttara-Go-Grahana* in which he alone had met the challenge of and had given a tough fight to Bhisma, Drona and Karna. But here he is shown as a victim of nervous breakdown, a pale, defunct and good-for-nothing creature.

Eliot's utterance in 'The Waste Land' HURRY UP LEASE ITS TIME', suggests more than time. It suggests the poet's mental perplexity, his frustration and his pessimism. And further :

> What shall I do now ?
> What shall I do ?
> I shall rush out as I am, and walk the street
> With my hair down, so, What shall we do tomorrow ?
> What shall we ever do ?[6]

There is no answer to this question. Life has no meaning. History has no meaning. The poet feels confounded. What shall I do is a question which shall never be answered.

The central theme of both 'Four Quartets' and the Gita is time-paradox—time that is so gigantic and powerful, still so fleeting and evanascent. Krishna says in the Gita : "I am the time-

Ogre, ready to devour the whole world."[7] And in the same tune, Eliot says :

> Time present and time past
> Are both perhaps present in timə future
> And time future contained in time past
> If all time is eternally present.
> All time is unredeemable.[8]

And a modern Hindi poet Jayashankar Prasad in his epic *Kamayani* puts this idea in the following manner : "The idea of space is completely lost in the perephery of time and time seeks its shelter in ultimate or super-consciousness."[9] The cosmic structure of the universe compels us to think in terms of the present only. What is the most surprising phenomena, Yaksha asks. Yudhisthirs's reply is : "Every moment death is claiming people. Yet those living conduct themelves in such a fashion as if they were never to die, what is more surprising than this ?"[10] Ages after Shakespeare expressed a similar surprise through Caesar's statement :

> Of all the wonders that I yet have heard,
> It seems to me most strange that man should fear;
> Seeing that death, a necessary end,
> Will come when it will come.[11]

But Eliot, like Einstein, thinks that the entire universe is in incessant motion and this motion takes a rotatory wheel-like circular form. We actually live in a world where the first and the final reality is not an 'immobile object' but an ever-active and ever-changing force. For Eliot; this idea is an article of faith different from the demonstrable truth of science. And further, what does modern science teach us ? Matter is an illusion. The atom has been reduced to an electron; and then, it is discovered that this electron, which enters into the constitution of the whole of our solid world, has itself no material stand; it is nothing but energy. This was precisely the problem before Heraclitus—the ancient Greek physical philosopher—from whose philosophy two exerpts are quoted by Eliot at the top of the poem 'Four Quartets.' The philosophy developed in the Gita as also in the 'Four

Quartets' is that all things for ever flow and change. Even in the stillest matter, there is unseen flux and movement. Cosmic history runs in repetitious cycles. To divide time in sigments like past, present and future is to take a superficial view of time. We actually live in timelessness. This was the underling idea of Buddha's theory of *Ksana-Bhangn-Vada.*

The natural corollary of this hypothesis is that life revolves in a cyclic order—the basic assumption of both the Gita and 'Four Quartets'. The Gita observes : "Birth implies death and so death also implies birth."[12] Eliot says :

> What we call beginning is often the end
> And to make an end is to make a beginning.[13]

The changes we find in physical body are out of and into the seamless tissue of Nature, an episode in Time's enduring record. The assimilation and disintegration of atoms which we assign the names of 'creation' and 'destruction', *Sristi* and *Sanhara* are illusory since neither birth is the beginning of life nor death is its terminus. The constituents of organism and the forces which build it up are not new since they are already in the field around and do but gather themselves together to work at a fresh nexus which we call life. The detachment called death is temporary and intervenes the cyclic movement of life for a very short time. Krishna says : "In the past, we all were dormant and we shall all again be dormant after the final dissolution of body. We have come up only in the middle for a very short time."[14] "The body is a clog, an incumbrance to the life of the indwelling immortal soul."[15] The cyclic movement of life is well symbolised in the *Swastika* mark—whose crossed spokes stand for the polar axis by the equatorial line where as its rotating activity stands for the dynamic nature of existence. Whatever moves must move spirally lest it should not move at all. Those who pessimistically hold that death is the unfathomable end of all, concentrate all their attention on body and mainly exhibit their ignorance of what soul is. Death ends the flesh, but leaves the mind, the soul, the veritable human essence untouched. This is the philosophy of the Gita. Eliot says :

> Or say that the end precedes the beginning,

and the end and the beginning were always there
Before the beginning and after the end.
And all is always now.[16]

The idea of the co-existence of birth and death, beginning and end was borrowed by Eliot from the Gita and from Bradleyan philosophy. Bradley remarks :

> .....the now contains merely the process of present turning into past. Process of duration may to us appear to be composite; but a very little reflection lays bare their inherent fraudulence. If they are not duration (they do not) containing an after and before, and they have, by themselves, no beginning or end, and are by themselves outside of time.[17]

Eliot takes God or soul or super-consciousness as the pivot round which every particle of this universe hinges. The 'stillpoint' described in 'Burnt Norton' is nothing but the focal point, the polar axis, that makes every object in this universe move without itself being moved. It is the centrifugal force which charges energy in all the moving bodies in the circuit. The centre does not move while everything around the centre moves. Brahma is the centre. He ie the nucleus. He is the stillpoint.

Neither movement from nor towards,
Neither ascent nor decline. Except for the point,
the still point,
There would be no dance, and there is only the dance.[18]

God is nothing that can be caught in space-time net, nothing that can be seen, touched or heard. We must not try to put the ultimate into a strait-jacket by particularising it into a shape, a time order, an attribute, a creature. It is, so far as human perception goes and so far our human reflection can go, not this, not that. A world of perception cannot be a self-sufficient one, a world stamped by relativity cannot be an ultimately real one. Therefore, the absolute reality must be beyond change. It must be a sphere where there is no change, no relativity, no time, no space, nothing that can change, no time interval between events that can be measured, Timeless and speechless would be utterly

empty when viewed from outside. Thought would come to rest not in a particular something but in a seeming blankness of being. If we think away all the form and solidity, the texture and taste, the smell and colour of any object, what remains ? When every attribute and quelity has thus been thought away. We are left with what is apparently an empty negation. There is nothing in the boundless empty silence to an observing intellect. He is the fountain of everlasting energy. It is His spark which shines everywhere. Hence, one can expect real dance at His doors only. Krishna says : "God's light is reflected in the heart of everybody. It is He who with His *Maya* controls man and moves him according to his *Karma.*"[19] The 'dance' reminds us of Lord Shiva's cosmie dance or even of *Maharasa* as described in the *Sri Mad Bhagvata* where it is said that Krishna alone prevails everywhere and all the *Gopis* are *Jivatmas* who owe their existence to Him and every Gopi has the feeling that Krishna is dancing with her, pand in hand. This cosmic dance further invocates the blessings reaching the ultimate. The dance—whether it is described in the *Sri Mad Bhagvata* or in 'Four Quartets' repcesents spiritual ecstasy and the 'Dancer' is God Himself to whose tune every atom of this universe pulsates and vibrates. In the *Vibhuti Darsana Yoga* chapter of the Gita, we see how like rivers coming from diverse directions and flowing to merge into the sea, the heroes are rushing headlong into the mouth of Krishna.[20] Both the author of the Gita and Eliot hold God as the central pa rt round which other parts are grouped or round which other parts collect.

Endorsing the message of Krishna, Eliot says that knowledge, however, profound it is, is not helpful in the way of self-realisation. What is needed is not dry erudition but a sense of total surrender. Knowledge often becomes a burden when it is not supplemented by faith, love, sympathy and piety. All knowledge is stuff and nonsense if it is isolated from an unflinching faith in God. So it happened with Dr. Faustus who was destroyed by his own egotism. So it happened with Ravana who was an acknowledged scholar but lacked faith in God and hence it was impossible for him to take himself out from the debris of pride and conceit. *Isavasyopanisad* says that 'boasting of knowledge is worse than knowledge. "If *avidya* takes us to darkness, the pride

of *vidya* takes us to still greater darkness."[21] Eliot, therefore, says :

> And what you do not know is
> The only thing you know.[22]

This sounds like a direct translation of the *Upanisadic* utterance "One who disclaims to know is the real knower and one who claims to know does not know at all."[23]

Then what is the solution ? A seeker of truth feels greatly bewildered particularly because his mind fails to work when he is face to face with God. His logic gives in, his tool of argument and no sequence of word can explain his experience. This is the moment of spiritual ecstasy. And in order to have it, one has not to depend upon knowledge but upon faith. One has to evacuate one's knowledge and learning from within oneself and strip oneself off all conceit. The *Sadhaka* shall have to undress himself as Mirn would say. The 'pool' of the so-called acquired knowledge should be dried out and the meaningless 'concrete' should be removed.

> Dry the pool, dry concrete, Brown edged
> And the pool was filled with water out of sunlight
> And the lotus rose, quietly, quietly
> The surface glittered out of heart of light
> And they were behind us, reflected in the pool,
> Then a cloud passed, and the pool was empty
> God, said the bird, for the leaves were full of children
> Hidden excitedly, containing laughter;
> Go, go, go, said the bird : human kind
> Cannot bear very much reality.[24]

The description has its parallel in the Bhagvad-Gita as also in the Paradiso Section of Dante's *Divine Comedy* and in the poem of the Spanish poet St. John of the Cross. It is remarkable that 'bird' here is the symbol of innocence. The leaves of the tree are all aglow with pleasure. There is joy everywhere. At the ecstatic moment everything seems to gleam with the light that comes from the heart of light, i.e., from the central light generating station. Eliot observes that the finite cannot comprehend the infinite,

Human kind cannot bear *very much* reality. The emphasis is on 'very much'. Arjuna lost his courage and peace and he started trembling when Krishna appeared before him in full form—in his 'very much' reality.[25] Then Arjuna had to pray to him to take back his former shape, the shape of *Caturbhuja*[26]. He had to sacrifice his ego and surrender himself before his master. Brahma set out to test the strength of Krishna and when he found that the cows and calfs whom he had blocked inside a cave were also available in the house of Krishna, he understood his folly and also experienced his limitations. Socrates, Christ and Gandhi were undone because people could not bear their 'very much' reality. Eliot says :

> You would have to put off
> Sense and notion. You are not here to verify,
> Instruct yourself, or inform curiosity
> Or carry report. You are here to kneel
> Where prayer has been valid. And prayer is more
> Than an order of words, the conscious occupation
> Of the praying mind, or the sound of the voice.[27]

It is, therefore, wiser to stand before God folded hands. Krishna says : "Give up all religions and surrender before me and I shall free you from all worldly sins and shall sanctify you."[23] *Kathopanisad* says : "God cannot be realized through logic."[29] *Canopanisad* says : "God is beyond the reach of the sense organs—the eyes, the words and the mind."[30] Eliot's idea that boasting of knowledge is an exercise in futility seems to have been derived from the Gita.

Eliot's description of the 'unimaginable zero summer' takes us to that region where nothing but perpetual bliss—*Ananda*—prevails. God is bliss incarnate. He is an amalgam of Truth, Consciousness and Bliss—*Set-Chit-Ananda*. Eliot says :

> Between melting and freezing
> The soul's sap quivers
> There is no earth smell
> Or smell of living thing.
> This is the spring time
> But not in time's coventant.

Now the hedgerow
Is blanched for an hour with transitory blossom
Of now, a bloom more sudden
Than that of summer, neither budding nor fading
Not in the scheme of generation.

Where is the summer, the unimaginable zero summer ?[31]

The 'zero summer' obviously is the moment of communion with God. For the Englishmen, summer is the most pleasant season. But Eliot tells us of 'zero summer' —the summer that knows no end or change over. It cannot be imagined. It cannot be subjected to formal analysis. As God is the creator, He can create miracles. For Him the Fire and the Rose are one and the same.[32] The blissful state described in the poem can be had through constant *Sadhana*. At the moment of self-realisation, the soul of the *Sadhaka* gets purified and broadened. He drinks heavenly nectar or *Amrita* which flickers from his own *Atma*. This is the moment of *Amrita srava* from the *sahasradal Kamal* of the *Mastiska*. The whole process is inscrutable. A detailed description of this mysterious process is found in the literature of *Yogacara-Sampradaya*. It is still to be discovered whether Eliot came in contact with the literature of *Yogacara-Sampradaya*.

Having already taught to Arjuna the immortality of soul and the cyclic order of life and thus removed his pessimism, Krishna goes on to tell him that he should confine himself to action only and bother not for its fruit. Krishna says : "Neither get yourself attached to your *Karma* not think of its fruit."[33] He says that the momentum of *Karma* is esoteric.[34] Eliot says :

O Voyagers, O Seamen,
You who came to port, and you whose bodies
Will suffer the trial and judgment of the sea,
Or whatever event, this is your real destination,
So Krishna, as when he admonished Arjuna
On the field of battle,
Not farewell,
But fareforward, voyagers.[35]

The word 'fareforward' indicates that after doing a work, the

doer should go ahead without thinking of the fruit of his action. The 'voyagers' are persons left in this world to suffer the trial and judgment of the ordial of life. Their success depends upon how much they have accomplished their task maintaining detachment and dispassion. *Sansara* means the empirical process from birth to death and from death to birth, a process every living being goes through, the particular manner of its existence in any given span of life depending upon its past *Karma* with the option of making its future better or worse. An important teaching of the Gita is that there should be determination, initiative and drive in the performance of one's duty.

There is no limit to the surging rise or to the subsiding tranquillity of the mind. Mind is the source of pain and pleasure, bondage and liberation.[36] The whole world is nothing but the scaffolding built by the mind. It cannot be other than our individual consciousness, which transforms the constantly moving electricity into a universe having the appearance of a visible world. The reality of a thing depends upon its being perceived by the mind. He who has subdued his mind is awake in that which is night to all beings.[37] Krishna describes a man who has attained mastery over wild passions as *Sthita-Prajna* i.e., a man whose mind is thoroughly stable. He is like a tortoise who shrinks his whole body within himself.[38] The mind of such a *Sadhaka* is likened to a candle placed in a secured place so that it cannot be disturbed by the hurricane.[39] And what is more, one who controls his sense organs from outside but lets them loose from inside is called *Vimudhatma* and *Mithyacari*.[40] Eliot compares the mind of such a disciplined with a still Chinese jar :

> The stillness, as a Chinese jar still
> Moves perfectly in its stillness.[41]

Patanjali defines *Yoga* as curbing of the ebb and flow of passion.[42] Eliot, the author of the Gita and Patanjali seem to aim at the same truth.

Krishna speaks to the warrior Arjuna on the denial of materialism and on the affirmation of the spirit as the ultimate truth. The body is abandoned but the soul on its way, *tyaktva kalevaram*. Much depends upon what man is at the critical moment of

his departure. For whatever form of becoming his consciousness is fixed on at the time of death and has been full of that always in his mind and thought before death, to that form he must attain, since the *Prakriti* by *Karma* works out of the soul's thoughts and energies and that is in fact her whole business. Krishna says : "Whoever leaves his body and departs remembering Me at his time of end comes to My *Bhava* that of the *Purusottama*.[43] This is also the view of the *Prasnopanisad*.[44]

Therefore, both the authors of the Gita and 'Four Quartets' insist on disciplined life and remind us again and again of the importance of austerity in life. To run after the fulfilment of carnal pleasure is to run amuck. The deed done in the past affects our present and whatever we do in the present will affect our future. In Eliot's words :

> And right action is
> From past and future also.[45]

When a man will know how to live in this world with complete detachment—like a leaf of lotus submerged in water—[46] his soul will attain *Kaivalya*. God comes to the rescue of those who are sunk in the whirlpool of egoistic attachment and wallow in the ditch of blind infatuation provided they realise then folly. Like Arjun, whose self-confession is—"My doubts and confusions have now been dispelled, I shall now obey you and do as you wlll,'—[46] Eliot also declares :

> Eternal darkness, deprivation
> And destitution of all prosperity
> Dessication of the world of Sense,[48]

It is yet to be explored whether Eliot was influenced by the allegory of *Sri Mad Bhagavata Maha Purana* and *Bharatiya Tantra Vidya*. Eliot was a multi-linguist and he was a man of variegated interest. So who knows when and in what direction his genius flowed ?

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Akhilesh Kumar Tripathy

THE GITA AND ALDOUS HUXLEY

Among all the major twentieth century writers, Aldous Huxley has been universally acknowledged as one of the most provocative and profound thinkers. His achievement on the plane of art as well as thought has been all along a subject of serious critical attention. The early decades of the present century were the period of great cataclysmic changes and unprecedented disintegration of life and values. The holocaust of the first global war projected 'an immense panorama of anarchy and futility' and generated in the western man an acute sense of bewilderment and lassitude. This dismal human situation had strong impact on Huxley and made him concerned about the future of mankind from the earliest period of his literary career. The author got engaged in search of a positive vision of life as a way out of the present predicament. This search was painful, making imperative for Huxley to harness all his intellectual and psychic potentialities. It was in his relentless intellectual and psychic odyssey that Huxley got his acquaintance with the Indian thought. Vedanta and Buddhism exerted probably the greatest influence on him and became ultimately the core of his "Perennial Philosophy." His fictional and philosphical writings reveal, however, that Bhagavadgita occupies the near central position in his philosophical canon. In *The Perennial Philosophy* (1949), Huxley writes : "The philosophy of the Upanishads reappears, developed and enriched, in the Bhagavadgita and was finally systematized, in the ninth century of our era, by Shankara."[1] Again, in his introduction to Swami Prabhavanand and Isherwood's translation of Bhagavad-

gita he writes : "The Bhagavadgita is perhaps the most systematic scriptural statement of the perennial philosophy."[2] An effort has been made in this paper to make a brief study of Huxley's ever growing and ever changing philosophy of life in the light of the Indian thought.

From the point of view of philosophy, there is clear distinction between the early and the later Huxley. The cynical and satirical Huxley of the earlier phase grows into a mystic in the later part, though remaining at the same time sceptical about western man's approval of his philosophy of life, (*Island*). In the early novels the writer is deeply concerned with the crucial chasm in the inner being of man. Almost all his major and minor characters are men of 'split-personality'. There is a profound gulf between their thought and action. This disintegration of personality has reached such a stage that men and women find themselves in perpetual torment for their inability to live up to the ideals they consider wholesome for their existence. It is at this stage that the relevance of Indian wisdom begins to impinge on the mind of the spiritual thinker. Calamy, the hero of *Those Barren Leaves* (1925), retires, at the end of the novel, to a mountain retreat in search of a solution for the distracted human life through meditation. In this sense he is an advanced version of the earlier heroes, Denis Stones and Gumbril Junior of *Crome Yellow* (1921) and *Antic Hay* (1923) respectively. Before Calamy succeeds in renouncing the world, he has to pass through a long and painful phase of struggle between the flesh and the spirit. His amorous relationship with Miss Thriplow proves to be the strongest impediment in his mission of yogic meditation to realize the unseen Reality. In the second part of the novel Calamy's utterances regarding his apprehension of something higher and purer than the mundane life of the senses and his inability to move towards the realization of this Reality due to the obstructing forces of the earthly life have the strong overtones of Indian philosophy enshrined in Vedanta and the Gita. Calamy has a poignant awareness of the impediments and thinks that :

> he couldn't at the same time lean out into the silence beyond the futile noise and bustle—into the mental silence that lies beyond the body—he couldn't at the same time do this and himself partake in the tumult; and if he

> wanted to look into the depths of mind, he must not interpose a preoccupation with his bodily appetites.[3]

Further in the novel Calamy stresses the need of mind's disentanglement from the web of worldly preoccupations as the primary requisite of meditation to attain God-realization :

> The mind must be open, unperturbed, empty of irrelev ant things, quiet. There's no room for thoughts in a half-shut cluttered mind. And thoughts won't enter a noisy mind; they're shy, they remain in their obscure hiding-places below the surface, when they can't be got at, so long as the mind is full and noisy. Most of us pass through life without knowing that they're there at all. If one wants to lure them out, one must clear a space for them, one must open the mind wide and wait. And there must be no irrelevant preoccupations prowling around the doors. One must free oneself of those.[4]

In this context Jerome Meckier suggests the impact of Bhagavadgita and writes : "If one compares Calamy's statements with some of the more basic advice to the yogi contained in the Bhagavadgita, it becomes clear that Calamy is discussing a few fairly fundamental contemplation procedures."[5] The preceding ideas of Calamy closely correspond to the advice of Lord Krishna to Arjuna regarding meditation for the realization of the Ultimate Reality in the second chapter of the Gita :

> Turbulent by nature, the senses even of a wise man, who is practising self-control, forcibly carry away his mind, Arjuna (v. 60)...
>
> Therefore having controlled them all and collecting his mind, one should sit for meditation, devoting oneself heart and soul to Me. For he whose senses are mastered, his mind has become stable (v. 61).[6]

But Arjuna realizes the formidability of concentrating the mind in the process of yogic mediation and tells the Lord :

> For *Krsna*, the mind is very unsteady, turbulent, tenacious and powerful; therefore, I consider it as difficult to control as the wind (VI, v. 34).

By the time Huxley finished *Those Barren Leaves* and started printing his masterpiece, *Point Counter Point* (1928), his friendship with D. H. Lawrence had deepended and took the form of literary influence. Huxley acknowledged Lawrence as a "superior" genius "in kind, not degree."[7] Thus in *Point Counter Point* Huxley's faith in spirituality is at a low ebb. The total spiritual commitment with which Calamy goes to the mountains appears to have been weakened in *Point Counter Point* under the impact of Lawrence's "religion of blood." In *Point Counter Point* there are several groups of characters sharing common traits and similar views of life. In one group we have characters wallowing in the quagmire of sensuality and lewdness. Then there are characters for whom dry intellectualism, an outcome of fantastic, scientific and technological advancement, is the highest reality of life, and in the third category we have the spiritualists in the religious sense. Thus the novel is peopled with barbarians of sex, intellect and spirituality. In contrast to these characters with their lop-sided view of life is Mark Rampion who stands for harmony and "wholeness" in life. Opposed to the theme of "self-division" represented by the three groups is the counter theme of "wholeness" represented by Mark Rampion who is a powerful critic of contemporary society. He is sensitively alive to the contradictory nature of social forces leading to the disintegration of man. He stands by the principle of a harmonious and integrated human personality :

> 'Civilization', he says, is harmony and completeness. Reason, feeling, instinct, the life of the body—Blake managed to induce and harmonize everything. Barbarism is being lop-sided. You can be a barbarian of the intellect as well as of the body. A barbarian of the soul and feelings as well as of sensuality. Christianity made us barbarians of the soul, and now science is making us barbarians of the intellect. Blake was the last civilized man.[8]

Mark Rampion disapproves of the modern technological civilization which has reduced life to a state of dead mechanicalness. He believes in the life of sanity and balance—balance between passion and reason—as in the life of the ancient Greeks.

He is the only character in the novel representing a positive outlook on life. Huxley recreates D. H. Lawrence in the character of Mark Rampion. Rampion not only embodies several traits of Lawrence's personality but lives in the novel as a mouth-piece of his prototype. What Rampion says about the modern civilization suffering from the triple disease of sentimentalism, materialism and industrialism is reminiscent of many passages in Lawrence. It is interesting to have a few illustrations from *Point Conter Point* :

> I call it Jesus' disease on the analogy of Bright's disease. Or rather Jesus's and Newton's disease; for the scientists are as much responsible as the Christians. It's Jesus's and Newton's and Henry Ford's disease. Between them, the three have pretty well killed us. Ripped the life out of our bodies and stuffed us with hatred (p. 121).

Again, a little further in the same chapter Rampion says :

> The Christians, who weren't sane told people that they'd got to throw half of themselves in the waste-paper basket. And now the scientists and businessmen come and tell us that we must throw away half of what the Christians left us. But I don't want to be three-quarters dead. I prefer to be alive, entirely alive. It's time there was a revolt in favour of life and wholeness. (p. 123).

Rampion's criticism of both Christian moralists and modern apostles of intellect becomes more and more savage and vituperative with the progress of the novel. Sentiments expressed in Rampion's criticism approximate closely to those we find in the writings of D. H. Lawrence. Lawrence's preoccupation with the life of the body made him question the accepted Christian myth of the Resurrection of Christ which no doubt recognizes the Christ risen in the body after his crucifixion, but denies him the pleasure of any physical existence on the earth. In "The Risen Lord" written almost simultaneously with "The Man Who Died", Lawrence asserted his belief that the resurrected Christ stood for the life of fertility, "...all the full flowering spring, all summer, and the autumn of wheat and fruit, all belong to Christ

Risen." In "The Man Who Died" resurrected Christ decides to lead his life differently from the one he had lived before his crucifixion. He realizes the mistake he had committed in his role as the Saviour and teacher of mankind. He had run to excess in his mission. He had denied that "the body, too, has its life, and beyond that, the greater life," and had emphasized virginity in recoil from "the little, greedy life of the body." But now he knew that "virginity is a form of greed; and that the body rises again to give and to take, to take and to give, ungreedily."[10]

But the impact of Laurentian philosophy was not to last long. In *Brave New World* (1932) Huxley seems to have outgrown it. The Savage represents the old civilization with faith in God, religion, Shakespeare and individualism. He is in sharp conflict with the new world civilization, projected in the remote future, based on the perfect advancement of science and technology. He embodies some traits of the Laurentian cult of 'life worship'. At the end of the novel we have him engaged in crucial ideological discussion with one of the controllers of the Brave New World, Mustapha Mond. Savage tells him :

> I don't want comfort. I want God, I want poetry, I want real danger, I want freedom, I want goodness. I want sin...'the right to grow old and ugly and impotent; the right to have syphilis and cancer...[11]

But Savage with his primitism has absolutely no place in the Brave New World and hence commits suicide. This is an obvious evidence of Huxley's disillusionment with the philosophy of D. H. Lawrence.

Eyeless in Gaza (1936) gives expression to Huxley's belief in spiritual values. He also suggests through the character of Anthony Beavis that man, in spite of his frailties, is capable of attaining great spiritual heights. By the time Huxley wrote *Eyeless in Gaza*, he had developed the conviction that a life of restraint and dedication to moral causes was the only means of escape from spiritual degeneration. This new turn in Huxley's career as a moral thinker was by no means sudden and unforeseen. It was rather the outcome of his persistent effort to evolve a positive philosophy of life. *Eyeless in Gaza*, thus, is remarkable as a sign-

post in Huxley's growth as a thinker. Before conversion, Anthony Beavis is a thorough hedonist, an irresponsible cynic and a believer in life of riotous freedom. He feels sceptical about religion and the elaborate code of ethics that goes with it. In the course of the novel Anthony comes in contact with characters having positive vision of life. First, he meets Brian Foxe who has imbibed his faith in God and radical Christianty from his mother. Then he comes in touch with Staithes in Mexico where he meets also his final liberator, Miller. Under their positive influence Anthony undergoes a process of metamorphosis. He becomes a thorough mystic and has faith in the Divine Ground. His following experience in a fit of intoxication is a clear evidence of the impact of Vedanta on him :

> I am not my body, I am not my sensations, I am not even my mind; I am that I am. I am *Om* that I *Om*. The sacred word Om represents Him. God is not limited by time. For the one is not absent from anything, and yet is separated from all thing...[12]

This is exactly what Anthony wants to attain as a mystic in the last phase of spiritual transformation. Under Miller's tutelage Anthony learns Buddhism and receives spiritual lessons. The first lesson that Miller gives Anthony is about diet control :

> 'No, not fasting', the doctor protested very seriously 'not fasting. Only a proper diet. No butcher's meat; it's prison, so far as you're concerned. And no milk; it'll only blow you up with wind. Take it in the form of cheese and butter; never liquid. And a minimum of eggs. And, of course, only one heavy meal a day. You don't need half the stuff you're eating.'
>
> (p. 537)

This is reminescent of what Lord Krishna tells Arjuna about the power of yogis and diet control :

> Other Yogis Offer the *Prana* breath into the *Apana*; even so, others, the *Apana* into the *Prana*. There are still

> others given to the practice of *Pranayama* (breath-control) who having regulated their diet and controlled the course of both the *Prana* and *Apana* airs pour their life-breaths into life-breaths. All these have their sins destroyed by sacrifice and know the truth about sacrifice.
>
> (Ch. IV. v. 29—30)

Anthony needs to destroy his sins through sacrifice. Hence the lesson in diet control to enter the realms of meditation. He carries on his meditation with devotion and commitment and is able ultimately to annihilate the "I" (ego) in him and realizes 'peace which passeth understanding. This is really the moment of liberation for Anthony, a moment of perfect peace and spiritual illumination :

> Frenzy of evil and separation. In peace there is unity. Unity with other lives. Unity with all being. For beneath all being, beneath the countless identical but separate patterns, beneath the attraction and repulsions, lies, peace. The same peace as underlies the frenzy of the mind. Dark peace, immeasurably deep. Peace from pride and hatred and anger, peace from craving and aversions, peace from all the separating frenzies. Peace through liberation, for peace is achieved freedom. Freedom and at the same time truth. The truth of unity actually experienced. Peace in the depths, under the storm, far down below the leaping of the waves, the frantically flying spray. Peace in this profound subaqueous night, peace in this silence, this still emptiness where there is no more time, where there are no more images, no more words. Nothing but the experience of peace; peace as a dark void beyond all personal life, and yet itself a form of life more intense, for all its diffuseness, for all the absence of aim or desire, richer and of finer quality than ordinary life...
>
> (*Eyeless in Gaza*, p. 399)

The impact of the Gita on Huxley is more pronounced in his

celebrated book *Ends and Means* (1937). The author makes an in-depth study of the varied aspects of modern life. He pleads for good means to attain novel ends. According to him man's highest aim is to attain unity with the Ultimate Reality. This is possible only through "nonattachment" and self-discipline. For Huxley an ideal man is a non-attached man :

> Non-attached to his bodily sensations and lusts. Non-attached to his craving for power and possession. Non-attached to the objects of these various desires. Non-attached to anger and hatred; non-attached to his exclusive loves. Non-attached to wealth, fame, social position.[12]

Such a man, according to the Gita, is a God realized man, a perfect yogi. When Arjuna wants to know from Krishna about the true ideal man, the Lord replies :

> He, who, having totally given up attachment to actions and their fruits, has got over the dependence on the world, and is ever the satisfied, does nothing at all, though he may be ever engaged in action.
>
> (Ch. IV, v. 20)

Both Gita and Huxley agree that without the attainment of the state of "non-attachment" unity with the Divine Ground is impossible. Huxley writes :

> ...We can say that separateness is attachment and that without non-attachment no individual can achieve unity either with God or, through God, with other individuals.
>
> (*Ends and Means*, p. 303)

The prominent methods of God-realization are : Karmayoga, Bhaktiyoga, Rajayoga, and Jnanayoga. Ever since the ancient times these methods have occupied the minds of both the realized saints as well as professoional philosophers. They have differed

in their conviction of one method's superiority over the other. Huxley's position in this controversy is noteworthy. About *Bhakti marga* he writes :

> *Bhakti marga* played a relatively small part in Indian religion—at any rate in the religion of the educated classes—until the coming of the Bhagavata reformation of the Middle Ages. Revolting against the pantheism of the Vedanta and the antheism of the Sankhya philosophy and of Buddhism, the leader of the Bhagavata reformation insisted on the personal nature of God....
>
> (*Ends and Means*, p. 235)

Huxley acknowledges *Jnana-marga* as the supreme method of God-realization. In the controversy regarding one method's superiority over the other the Bhagavadgita offers a clear answer. The Gita says that this controversy is meaningless. The various methods are not contradictory to each other. These are, in fact, four stages in the process of God-realization. Hence one method leads to the other, constituting a coherent system of God-realization. (For this we can refer to the verses 54-55 of the eighteenth chapter and verses 3 to 7 of the twelfth chapter of the Bhagavadgita).

After Many a Summer Dies the Swan (1939) and *Time Must Have a Stop* (1945) illustrate the supreme value of faith in the Absolute that lies behind the flux of life. The central theme of these novels is that time is evil and the true liberation or *mukti* is deliverance into the timeless Ground of all being. The "unifying philosophy" in *After Many a Summer* finds expression through Propter who is a man of integrated personality and practises what he preaches. He is almost like the *Sthita-Prajna* in the Gita. Propter's unifying philosophy defines man as "a nothingness surrounded by God, indigent and capable of God, filled with God if he so desires."[14] Man is a "nothingness" because his personality is an illusion; and his "all important ego" which prevents him from the realization of god, is a "fiction, a kind of nightmare, a frantically agitated nothingness."[15] The ego obstructs spritual illumination and fosters fear, anxiety, craving, grief and

ambition. To consider this ego as a permanent object is the peak of human folly : Man is, no doubt, a "nothingness," but at the same time, he is capable of God too. God is in man himself, unknowable to the personal human mind which is dominated by ego-consciousness. The realization of God, therefore, can be possible only with the denial of the self. The ego gives man a consciousness of his separate entity and this is a formidable obstacle in the way of God-realization. Nevertheless, it is within man's power to transcend the limits of this self and achieve identity with the all pervasive divine. In *Time Must Have a Stop* Sebastian Barnack's philosophy is identical with that of Propter's in the preceding novel. The innocent Sebastian passes through the influence of several characters in the novel. He is also convinced ultimately like his predecessors that man is capable of God-realization. He thinks :

> That it is possible for human beings to love, Know and, from virtually, to become actually identified with the Ground.
>
> That to achieve this unitive knowledge, to realize this supreme identity, is the final end and purpose of human existence.[16]

Huxley's last novel *Island* (1962) presents an ideal world of Utopia where we find man at his best. The novel presents a picture of life completely free from the ills and abnormalities of the modern industrial civilization. It offers an ideal blend of western science and Indian philosophy. The entire structure of the ideal world on the land of Pala is based on the twin concepts of Mahayan Buddhism and yoga. The Palanese childern are trained from the very beginning to realize the supreme truth of *Tat tvam asi* (That thou art). The Palanese people have realized that human personality is a blend of the there *gunas* (*satva*, *rajas* and *tamas*) as established by the Gita[17] and the dominance of any one particular *guna* determines the individual's temperament. Their thinking is that each person can be prescribed an individual method of yoga to suit his temperamental preference to attain *Nirvana*.

Huxely's exploration of Indian philosophy was a life long venture and he found it most suited to his temperament and the

requirements of the age. The Bhagavadgita unmistakably provided Huxley with a comprehensive philosophy. At the end of his introduction to Isherwood's translation of the Bhagavadgita he writes :

> To a world at war, a world that, because it lacks the intellectual and spiritual prerequisites to peace, can only hope to patch up some kind of precarious armed truce, it (Gita) stands pointing, clearly and unmistakably, to the only road of escape from the self imposed necessity of self-destruction.
>
> (p. 22)

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